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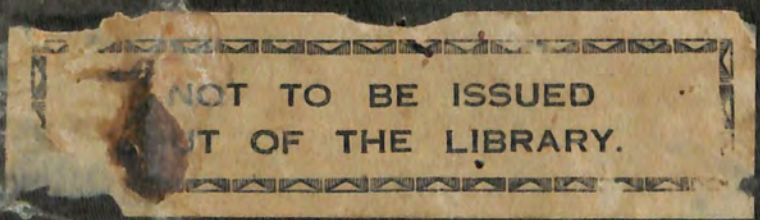
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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MUSSULMAUNS OF INDIA:

DESCRIPTIVE OF THEIR

MANNERS, CUSTOMS, HABITS,

AND

RELIGIOUS OPINIONS.

MADE DURING A

TWELVE YEARS' RESIDENCE IN THEIR

IMMEDIATE SOCIETY.

2917.

BY MRS. MEER HASSAN ALI.

15729

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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WITH SENTIMENTS OF GRATITUDE

AND PROFOUND RESPECT

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE HUMBLY DEDICATED,

WITH PERMISSION,

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE PRINCESS AUGUSTA;

BY HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

MOST OBEDIENT,

FAITHFULLY ATTACHED,

AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

B. MEER HASSAN ALI.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

ACTUATED by a sense of duty to the people with whom twelve years of my life were passed on terms of intimacy and kindness, I was induced to write the principal number of the following Letters as faithful sketches of the Manners, Customs, and Habits of a people but little known to the European reader. They were at first designed merely for the perusal of private friends; who, viewing them with interest, recommended my bringing them before the public, considering that the information they contained would be acceptable from its originality, as presenting a more familiar view of the opinions and the domestic habits of the Mussulmaun community of Hindoostaun than any hitherto presented through other channels.

I have found (and I believe many will coincide with me in the opinion) that it is far easier to think with propriety than to write our thoughts with perspicuity and correctness; but when the object in view is one which conscience dictates, the humblest effort of a female pen advances with courage; and thus influenced, I venture to present my work to the public, respectfully trusting they will extend their usual indulgence to a first attempt, from the pen of a very humble scribe, more solicitous for approbation than applause.

The orthography of Asiatic words may differ in some instances in my pages from those of other writers,—this, however, is from error not design, and may be justly attributed to my own faulty pronunciation.

I have inserted in these Letters many anecdotes and fables, which, at the first view, may be considered as mere nursery tales. My object, however, will I trust plead my excuse:—they are introduced in order to illustrate the people whom I have undertaken to describe; and, primarily strengthened by the moral ten-

dency of each anecdote or fable selected for my pages, I cannot but consider them as well suited to the purpose.

Without farther apology, but with very great deference, I leave these imperfect attempts to the liberality of my readers, acknowledging with gratitude the condescending patronage I have been honoured with, and sincerely desiring wherever anticipations of amusement or information from my observations have been formed, that the following pages may fulfil those expectations, and thus gratify my wish to be in the smallest degree useful in my generation.

OBSERVATIONS,

&c.

LETTER I.

Introductory Remarks.—The characteristic simplicity of manners exhibited in Native families.—Their munificent charity.—The Syaads.—Their descent, and the veneration paid to them.—Their pride of birth.—Fast of Mahurrum.—Its origin.—The Sheahs and Soonies.—Memorandum of distances.—Mount Judee (Judea), the attributed burying-place of Adam and Noah.—Mausoleum of Ali.—The tomb of Eve.—Meer Hadjee Shaah.

I HAVE promised to give you, my friends, occasional sketches of men and manners, comprising the society of the Mussulmauns in India. Aware of the difficulty of my task, I must entreat your kind indulgence to the weaknesses of a female pen, thus exercised for your amusement, during my twelve years' domicile in their immediate society.

Every one who sojourns in India for any lengthened period, will, I believe, agree with me, that in order to promote health of body, the mind must be employed in active pursuits. The constitutionally idle persons, of either sex, amongst Europeans, are invariably most subject to feel distressed by the prevailing annoyances of an Indian climate: from a listless life results discontent, apathy, and often disease. I have found, by experience, the salutary effects of employing time, as regards, generally, healthiness of body and of mind. The hours devoted to this occupation, (tracing remarks for the perusal of far distant friends,) have passed by without a murmur or a sigh, at the height of the thermometer, or the length of a day during the season of hot winds, or of that humid heat which prevails throughout the periodical rains. Time flies quickly with useful employment in all places; in this exhausting climate every one has to seek amusement in their own resources, from sunrise to sunset, during which period there is no moving from home for, at least, eight months out of the

twelve. I have not found any occupation so pleasant as talking to my friends, on paper, upon such subjects as may admit of the transfer for their acceptance;—and may I not hope, for their gratification also?

The patriarchal manners are so often pictured to me, in many of the every-day occurrences exhibited in the several families I have been most acquainted with in India, that I seem to have gone back to that ancient period with my new-sought home and new friends. Here I find the master and mistress of a family receiving the utmost veneration from their slaves and domestics, whilst the latter are permitted to converse and give their opinions with a freedom (always respectful), that at the first view would lead a stranger to imagine there could be no great inequality of station between the persons conversing. The undeviating kindness to aged servants, no longer capable of rendering their accustomed services; the remarkable attention paid to the convenience and comfort of poor relatives, even to the most remote in consanguinity; the beamings of universal charity; the

tenderness of parents; and the implicit obedience of children, are a few of those amiable traits of character from whence my allusions are drawn, and I will add, by which my respect has been commanded. In their reverential homage towards parents, and in affectionate solicitude for the happiness of those venerated authors of their existence, I consider them the most praiseworthy people existing.

On the spirit of philanthropy exhibited in their general charity, I may here remark, that they possess an injunction from their Lawgiver, "to be universally charitable." This command is reverenced and obeyed by all who are his faithful followers. They are persuaded that almsgiving propitiates the favour of Heaven, consequently this belief is the inducing medium for clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, supporting the weak, consoling the afflicted, protecting the fatherless, sheltering the houseless traveller, and rendering the ear and the heart alive to the distresses of the poor in all situations. A good Mussulmaun never allows the voice to pass unheeded where the suppliant

applies, "In the name of God," or "For the love of God."

I have often been obliged to hear the Mussulmauns accused of an ostentatious display of their frequent acts of charity. It may be so in some instances; human nature has failings common to all complexions. Pride may sometimes open the purse of the affluent to the poor man's petition; but when the needy benefit by the rich, it is unjust to scrutinize the heart's motive, where the act itself alleviates the present sufferings of a fellow-creature.

Imposition is doubtless often practised with success by the indolent, who excite the good feelings of the wealthy by a tale of woe; the sin rests with him who begs unworthily, not with him who relieves the supposed distresses of his poorer neighbour. The very best of human beings will acknowledge they derive benefits from the bounty of their Maker, not because they are deserving, but that "He is merciful."

I shall have occasion to detail in my Letters some of the Mussulmaun observances, festivals,

&c. which cannot be accomplished without feeding the poor; and, in justice to their general character, be it acknowledged, their liberality is not confined to those stated periods.

The Syaads (Meers), are descendants from Mahumud, the acknowledged Prophet and Lawgiver of the Mussulmauns; and, as might be expected, are peculiar objects of respect and favour amongst the true believers, (as those who hold their faith are designated). "The poor Syaad's family," are the first to be considered, when the rich have determined on dispensing gifts in charity. The Syaads, however, are under peculiar restrictions, as regards the nature of those gifts which they are permitted to accept. Money obtained by unlawful means, as forbidden in the Khoraun (usury for instance), is deemed polluted, and must neither be offered to, nor accepted by, these "children of the Prophet."

The Syaads are the Lords of Mussulmaun society, and every female born to them is a Lady (Begum). Heralds' offices they have none, but genealogy is strictly kept in each Mussulmaun

family, who can boast the high privilege of bearing the Prophet's blood in their veins. The children of both sexes are taught, from the time of their first speaking intelligibly, to recount their pedigree, up to Hasan, or Hosein, the two sons of Ali, by his cousin Fatima, the daughter of their Prophet: this forms a striking part of their daily education, whilst they continue in their mother's zeenahnáh (lady's apartment); and, from the frequent repetition, is so firmly fixed in the memory, that they have no difficulty in tracing their pedigree whenever called upon to do so, unaided by the manuscript genealogy kept with care in the parental treasury.

This method of retaining lineage is not always a check against impostors; many have taken upon themselves the honourable distinction of the Syaad, without having the slightest claim to the title; but when the cheat is discovered such persons are disgraced, and become aliens to the respectable. So many advantages are enjoyed by Syaads, that it is not surprising there should be some, which have no right, anxious to be numbered with those, who are truly, the

Mussulmaun lords; though such men are taught to believe that, by the usurpation, they shut themselves out from the advantages of their Prophet's intercession at the great day of judgment.

The Syaads are very tenacious in retaining the purity of their race unsullied, particularly with respect to their daughters; a conscientious Syaad regards birth before wealth in negotiations for marriage: many a poor lady, in consequence of this prejudice, lives out her numbered days in single blessedness, although, —to their honour be it told,—many charitably disposed amongst the rich men of the country, have, within my recollection of Indian society, granted from their abundance sufficient sums to defray the expenses of a union, and given the marriage portion, unsolicited, to the daughters of the poorer members of this venerated race. A Syaad rarely speaks of his pecuniary distresses, but is most grateful when relieved.

I am intimately acquainted with a family in which this pride of birth predominates over every advantage of interest. There are three unmarried daughters, remarkable for their in-

dustrious habits, morality, and strict observance of their religious duties; they are handsome, well-formed women, polite and sensible, and to all this they add an accomplishment which is not by any means general amongst the females of Hindoostaun, they have been taught by their excellent father to read the Khoraun in Arabic,—it is not allowed to be translated,—and the Commentary in Persian. The fame of their superiority has brought many applications from the heads of families possessing wealth, and desirous to secure for their sons wives so eminently endowed, who would waive all considerations of the marriage dowry, for the sake of the Begum who might thus adorn their untitled house. All these offers, however, have been promptly rejected, and the young ladies themselves are satisfied in procuring a scanty subsistence by the labour of their hands. I have known them to be employed in working the jaullie (netting) for courtie's (a part of the female dress), which, after six days' close application, at the utmost could not realize three shillings each; yet I never saw them other than

contented, happy, and cheerful,—a family of love, and patterns of sincere piety.

The titles and distinctions conferred by sovereigns, or the Hon. East India Company in India, as Khaun, Bahadhoor, Nuwaub, &c. are not actually hereditary honours, though often presumed on, and indulged in, by successors. The Syaads, on the contrary, are the Meers and Begums (nobility,) throughout their generations to the end of time, or at any rate, with the continuance of the Mussulmaun religion.

Having thus far explained the honourable distinction of the Syaads, I propose giving you some account of the Mahurrum, a celebrated mourning festival in remembrance of their first martyrs, and which occupies the attention of the Mussulmauns annually to a degree of zeal that has always attracted the surprise of our countrymen in India; some of whom, I trust, will not be dissatisfied with the observations of an individual, who having spent many years of her life with those who are chief actors in these scenes, it may be expected, is the better able to explain the nature of that Mahurrum, which

they see commemorated every year, yet many, perhaps, without comprehending exactly why. Those strong expressions of grief,—the sombre cast of countenance,—the mourning garb,—the self-inflicted abstinence, submitted to by the Mussulmaun population, during the ten days set apart for the fulfilment of the mourning festival, all must have witnessed who have been in Hindoostaun for any period.

I must first endeavour to represent the principal causes for the observance of Mahurrum; and, for the information of those who have witnessed its celebration, as well as for the benefit of others who have not had the same opportunity, describe the manner of celebrating the event, which occurred more than twelve hundred years ago.

Hasan and Hosein were the two sons of Fatima and Ali, from whom the whole Syaad race have generated; Hasan was poisoned by an emissary of the usurping Calipha's; and Hosein, the last sad victim of the family to the King Yuzeed's fury, suffered a cruel death, after the most severe trials, on the plains of Kraabaallah,

on the tenth day of the Arabian month Mahurrum; the anniversary of which catastrophe is solemnized with the most devoted zeal.

This brief sketch constitutes the origin of the festival; but I deem it necessary to detail at some length, the history of that period, which may the better explain the motives assigned by the Mussulmauns, for the deep grief exhibited every year, as the anniversary of Mahurrum returns to these faithful followers of their martyred leaders, Hasan and Hosein, who, with their devoted families, suffered innocently by the hands of the guilty.

Yuzeed, the King of Shawm, it appears, was the person in power, amongst the followers of Mahumud, at that early period of Mussulmaun history. Of the Soonie sect,* his hatred to the descendants of Mahumud was of the most inveterate kind; jealousy, it is supposed, aided by a very wicked heart, led him to desire the extirpation of the whole race, particularly as he knew that, generally, the Mussulmaun people

* The Soonies favour the Caliphas—the Sheahs favour the Émaum Ali.

secretly desired the immediate descendants of their Prophet to be their rulers. They were, however, intimidated by the Yuzeed's authority; whilst he, ever fearing the possibility of the Syaads' restoration to their rights, resolved, if possible, on sacrificing the whole family, to secure himself in his illegal power.

Ali had been treacherously murdered through the contrivances of the usurping Calipha; after his death, the whole family removed from Shawm, the capital, to Medina, where they lived some years in tranquillity, making many converts to their faith, and exercising themselves in the service of God and virtuous living. Unostentatious in their habits and manners, they enjoyed the affection of their neighbours, their own good name increasing daily, to the utter dismay of their subtle enemy.

In the course of time, the devout people of Shawm, being heartily tired of Yuzeed's tyrannical rule, and fearing the true faith would be defamed by the excesses and abuses of power committed by him, they were desirous of calling to their aid a leader from the Prophet's

family, who would secure, in its original purity, the performance of that religion which Mahumud had taught. Some thousands of respectable Mussulmauns, it is related, signed a petition to Hosein, requesting his immediate presence at Shawm, in order, as the petition stated, "that the religion, his grandsire taught, might be supported and promoted;" and declaring, "the voluptuousness and infamy of Yuzeed's life to be so offensive and glaring, that the true faith was endangered by his vicious examples;" and entreating him to accept his lawful rights as "Emaum," (Leader of the Faithful.)

Hosein received the petition, but declined accepting the proposed restitution of his family's rights at that time; yet he held out hopes in his reply, that he might eventually listen to their entreaties, should he be convinced his presence was essential to their welfare; and, as a prelude to this, he sent his cousin Moslem, on whom he could rely, to make personal observation of the real state of things at Shawm; expecting to learn, from his matured knowledge, the real causes of complaint, and the wishes of the

people, and by whose report he would be guided, as to his final acceptance or rejection of the proposed measure for his becoming their leader.

Moslem, accompanied by his two sons, mere youths, left Medina on this important mission, and having accomplished the tedious march without accident or interruption, he delivered Hosein's letters to those persons of consequence in Shawm, who were at the head of the party petitioning his appearance there, and who proffered their influence and support for the recovery of the rights and privileges so long withheld from the descendants of Mahumud.

Moslem was kindly greeted by them, and multitudes flocked to his quarters, declaring Hosein the lawful leader of true Mussulmauns. Elated with these flattering indications, he too promptly despatched his messengers to Hosein, urging his immediate return to Shawm.

In the mean time, and long before the messengers could reach Medina, Yuzeed, learning the state of things in the capital, was seriously alarmed and greatly enraged; he issued orders for the seizure of Moslem and his children, and

desiring to have them brought to his presence, offered immense sums of money for their capture. The friends of Moslem, however, succeeded, for a time, in secreting his person from King Yuzeed's emissaries, trusting the darkness of night would enable him to escape. But the slaves and dependants of the tyrant being despatched into all quarters of the city, Moslem's retreat was eventually discovered; and, through the influence of a purse of gold, his person was given up to the King's partizans.

The unfortunate agent of Hosein had confided the charge of his two sons to the Kauzy of the city, when the first report reached him of the tyrant Yuzeed's fury. This faithful Kauzy, as the night advanced, intended to get the poor boys conveyed to the halting place of a Kaarawaun, which he knew was but a few miles off, on their route for Medina. The guide, to whom the youths were intrusted, either by design or mistake, took the wrong road; and, after wandering through the dreary night, and suffering many severe trials, they were taken prisoners by the cruel husband of a very amiable female,

who had compassionately, at first, given them shelter as weary travellers only; but, on discovering whose children they were, she had secreted them in her house. Her husband, however, having discovered the place of their concealment, and identified them as the sons of Moslem, cruelly murdered the innocent boys for the sake of the reward offered for their heads. In his fury and thirst for gold, this wicked husband of the kind-hearted woman spared not his own wife and son, who strove by their united efforts, alternately pleading and resisting, to save the poor boys from his barbarous hands.

This tragic event is conveyed into pathetic verse, and as often as it is repeated in the families of the Mussulmauns, tears of fresh sympathy are evinced, and bewailings renewed. This forms the subject for one day's celebration during Mahurrum; the boys are described to have been most beautiful in person, and amiable in disposition.

After enduring ignominy and torture, and without even being brought to trial, Moslem was cast from a precipice, by Yuzeed's orders,

and his life speedily terminated, to glut the vengeance of the tyrant King.

As the disastrous conclusion of Moslem's mission had not reached the ear of Hosein, he, elated with the favourable reception of his cousin, and the prospect of being received at Shawm in peace and good will, had without delay commenced his journey, accompanied by the females of his family, his relations, and a few steady friends who had long devoted themselves to his person and cause. The written documents of that remarkable period notice, that the whole party of Hosein, travelling from Medina towards Shawm, consisted only of seventy-two souls: Hosein having no intention to force his way to the post of leader, had not deemed it necessary to set out with an army to aid him, which he undoubtedly might have commanded by his influence with the people professing "the Faith."

Yuzeed, in the mean time, having by his power destroyed Moslem and the two youths his sons, and receiving positive intelligence that Hosein had quitted Medina to march

for Shawm, as his fears suggested, with an army of some magnitude, he ordered out an immense force to meet Hosein on the way, setting a price on his head, and proclaiming promises of honours and rewards, of the most tempting nature, to the fortunate man who should succeed in the arduous enterprise.

The first detachment of the Shawmies, (as they are designated in the manuscript of Arabia), under a resolute chief named Hurrh, fell in with Hosein's camp, one day's march beyond the far-famed ground, amongst Mussulmauns, of Kraabaallah, or Hurth Maaree, as it was originally called.

Hurrh's heart was subdued when he entered the tent of the peaceable Hosein, in whose person he discovered the exact resemblance of the Prophet; and perceiving that his small camp indicated a quiet family party journeying on their way, instead of the formidable force Yuzeed's fears had anticipated, this chief was surprised and confounded, confessed his shame to Hosein that he had been induced to accept the command of the force despatched

against the children of the Prophet, and urged, in mitigation of his offences, that he had long been in Yuzeed's service, whose commission he still bore; but his heart now yearning to aid, rather than persecute the Prophet's family, he resolved on giving them an opportunity to escape the threatened vengeance of their bitterest enemy. With this view, he advised Hosein to fall with his party into the rear of his force, until the main body of the Shawmies had passed by; and as they were then on the margin of a forest, there to separate and secrete themselves till the road was again clear, and afterwards to take a different route from the proposed one to Shawm.

Hosein felt, as may be supposed, grateful to his preserver; and, following his directions, succeeded in reaching the confines of Kraabaallah unmolested.

The ancient writings of Arabia say, Mahumud had predicted the death of Hosein, by the hands of men professing to be of "the true faith," at this very place Kraabaallah, or Hurth Maaree.

Hosein and his family having concluded their morning devotions, he first inquired and learned the name of the place, on which their tents were pitched, and then imparted the subject of his last night's dream, " that his grandsire had appeared to him, and pronounced that his soul would be at peace with him ere that day closed." Again he fell on his knees in devout prayer, from which he rose, only to observe the first warnings of an approaching army, by the thick clouds of dust which darkened the horizon; and before the evening closed upon the scene, Hosein, with every male of his small party capable of bearing arms, had been hurried to their final rest. One son of Hosein's, insensible from fever at the time, was spared from the sacrifice, and, with the females and young children, taken prisoners to the King's palace at Shawm.

The account given by historians of this awful battle, describes the courage and intrepidity of Hosein's small band, in glowing terms of praise; having fought singly, and by their desperate bravery " each arm (they say) levelled his

hundreds with their kindred dust ere his own gave way to the sway of death."

Amongst the number of Hosein's brave defenders was a nephew, the son of Hasan: this young man, named Cossum, was the affianced husband of Hosein's favourite daughter, Sakeena Koobraah; and previous to his going to the combat on that eventful day, Hosein read the marriage lines between the young couple, in the tent of the females. I mention this here, as it points to one particular part of the celebration of Mahurrum, which I shall have occasion to mention in due order, wherein all the outward forms of the wedding ceremony are strictly performed, annually.

During the whole of this terrible day, at Kraabaallah, the family party of Hosein had been entirely deprived of water; and the river Fraught (Euphrates) being blockaded by their enemies, they suffered exceedingly from thirst. The handsome Abass, another nephew of Hosein, and his standard-bearer, made many efforts to procure water for the relief of the almost famishing females; he had, at one at-

tempt, succeeded in filling the mushukh,* when, retreating from the river, he was discovered by the enemy, was pursued and severely wounded, the mushukh pierced by arrows, and the water entirely lost ere he could reach the camp.

In remembrance of this privation of the sufferers at Kraabaallah, every good Mussulmaun, at Mahurrum, distributes sherbet in abundance, to all persons who choose to accept this their favourite beverage, (sugar and water, with a little rose water, or kurah, to flavour it;) and some charitable females expend large sums in milk, to be distributed in the public streets; for these purposes, there are neat little huts of sirrakee (a reed, or grass, resembling bright straw) erected by the road side of the Mussulmaun's houses; they are called saabeels, where the red earthen cups of milk, sherbet, or pure water are seen ranged in rows, for all who choose to call for drink.

* A leathern skin for conveying water, in general use amongst Mussulmauns at this day in India; it is composed of the entire skin of a goat, properly prepared. When filled with water, it resembles a huge porpoise, on the back of the beeshtie (water carrier).

Hosein, say their historians, was the last of the party who suffered on the day of battle; he was surrounded in his own camp,—where, by the usage of war, at that time, they had no right to enter,—and when there was not one friendly arm left to ward the blow. They relate "that his body was literally mangled, before he was released from his unmerited sufferings." He had mounted his favourite horse, which, as well as himself, was pierced by arrows innumerable; together they sank on the earth from loss of blood, the cowardly spearmen piercing his wounded body as if in sport; and whilst, with his last breath, "Hosein prayed for mercy on his destroyers, Shimeear ended his sufferings by severing the already prostrate head from the mutilated trunk."—"Thus they sealed (say those writers,) the lasting disgrace of a people, who, calling themselves Mussulmauns, were the murderers of their Prophet's descendants."

This slight sketch gives but the outline of those events which are every year commemo-

rated amongst the zealous followers of Ali, the class denominated Sheahs.

The Mussulmaun people, I must here observe, are divided into two distinct sects, viz. the Sheahs and the Soonies. The former believe Ali and his descendants were the lawful leaders after Mahumud; the latter are persuaded that the Caliphas, as Aboubuker, Omir, &c. were the leaders to be accredited "lawful;" but of this I shall speak more fully in another Letter.

Perhaps the violence of party spirit may have acted as an inducement to the Sheahs, for the zealous annual observance of this period, so interesting to that sect; whatever the motive, we very often find the two sects hoard up their private animosities and dislikes until the return of Mahurrum, which scarcely ever passes over, in any extensively populated city of Hindoostaun, without a serious quarrel, often terminating in bloodshed.

I could have given a more lengthened account of the events which lead to the solemnization of this fast, but I believe the present is sufficient

to explain the motives by which the Mussulmauns are actuated, and my next Letter must be devoted to the description of the rites performed upon the celebration of these events in India.

P.S. I have a memorandum in my collection which may here be copied as its proper place.

From Mecca, "The Holy City," to Medina the distance is twelve stages, (a day's march is one stage, about twenty miles of English measurement). From Medina to Kraabaallah, there are twenty-one stages; this distance is travelled only by those who can endure great difficulties; neither water nor provisions are to be met with on the whole journey, excepting at one halt, the name of which is Shimmaar. From Kraabaallah to Koofah, is two stages.

In the vicinity of Koofah stands Mount Judee (Judea), on which is built, over the remains of Ali, the mausoleum called Nudghiff Usheruff. On this Mount, it is said, Adam and Noah were buried. Ali being aware of this, gave directions to his family and friends, that whenever

his soul should be recalled from earth, his mortal remains were to be deposited near those graves venerated and held sacred "by the faithful." The ancient writers of Arabia authorise the opinion that Ali's body was entombed by the hands of his sons, Hasan and Hosein, who found the earth open to receive their sire, and which closed immediately on his remains being deposited.

Here, too, it is believed Noah's ark rested after the Deluge. When pilgrims to Mecca make their zeearut (all sacred visits are so called,) to this Mount, they offer three prayers, in memory of Adam, Noah, and Ali.

The grave of Eve is also frequently visited by pilgrims, which is said to be situated near Jeddah; this, however, is not considered an indispensable duty, but, as they say, prompted by "respect for the Mother of men."

These remarks, and many others of an interesting nature, I have been favoured with from the most venerable aged man I ever knew, Meer Hadjee Shaah, the revered father of my excellent husband; who having performed the

Hadje (pilgrimage), three several times, at different periods of his eventful life,—returning after each pilgrimage to his home in Lucknow,—and being a person of strict veracity, with a remarkably intelligent mind and retentive memory, I have profited largely by his information, and derived from it both amusement and instruction, through many years of social intercourse. When he had numbered more than eighty years he dwelt with hope on again performing the Hadje, where it was his intention to rest his earthly substance until the great day of restitution, and often expressed his wishes to have me and mine to share with him the pilgrimage he desired to make. But this was not allowed to his prayer; his summons arrived rather unexpectedly to those who loved and revered him for virtues rarely equalled; happily for him, his pure soul was prepared to meet his Creator, in whose service he had passed this life, with all humility, and in whose mercy alone his hopes for the future were centred.

LETTER II.

Celebration of Mahurrum.—The Tazia.—Mussulmaun Cemeteries.—An Emaum-baarah.—Piety of the ladies.—Self-inflicted abstinence and privations endured by each sex.—Instances of the devotional zeal of the Mussulmauns.—Attempted infringement on their religious formalities.—The Resident at Lucknow.—Enthusiastic ardour of the poor.—Manner of celebrating the Mahurrum in opposition to the precepts of the Khoraun.—Mosque and Emaum-baarah contrasted.—The supposition of Mussulmauns practising idolatry confuted.

My former Letter prepares you for the celebration of Mahurrum, the observance of which is at this time going forward here (at Lucknow,) with all that zealous emulative spirit and enthusiasm which I have before remarked the Mussulmaun population of India entertain for their Emaums (leaders), and their religion.

This annual solemn display of the regret and veneration they consider due to the memory of

departed excellence, commences on the first day of the Moon (Mahurrum). The Mussulmaun year has twelve moons; every third year one moon is added, which regulation, I fancy, renders their years, in a chronological point of view, very nearly equal with those of Europe. Their day commences and ends when the stars are first visible after sunset.

The first day of Mahurrum invariably brings to my recollection, the strongly impressed ideas of "The Deserted Village." The profound quiet and solemn stillness of an extensively populated native city, contrasted with the incessant bustle usual at all other times, are too striking to Europeans to pass by unheeded. This cessation of the animated scene, however, is not of long duration; the second day presents to the view vast multitudes of people parading backwards and forwards, on horseback, in palkies, and on foot, through the broad streets and roadways, arrayed in their several mourning garbs, speeding their way to the Emaumbaarahs of the great men, and the houses of friends, to pay the visit of respect (zeearut),

wherever a Tazia is set up to the remembrance of Hasan and Hosein.

The word Tazia, signifies grief. The term is applied to a representation of the mausoleum at Kraabaallah, erected by their friends and followers, over the remains of Hasan and Hosein. It is formed of every variety of material, according to the wealth, rank, or preference, of the person exhibiting, from the purest silver down to bamboo and paper, strict attention being always paid to preserve the model of Kraabaallah, in the exact pattern with the original building. Some people have them of ivory, ebony, sandal-wood, cedar, &c., and I have seen some beautifully wrought in silver filigree. The handsomest of the kind, to my taste, is in the possession of his Majesty the King of Oude, composed of green glass, with brass mouldings, manufactured in England (by whom I could not learn). All these expensive Tazias are fixtures, but there are temporary ones required for the out-door ceremony, which, like those available to the poor and middling classes, are composed of bamboo frames, over which

is fixed coloured uberuck (lapis specularum, or tulk); these are made in the bazaar, of various sizes and qualities, to suit the views of purchasers, from two rupees to two hundred each.

The more common Tazias are conveyed in the procession on the tenth day, and finally deposited with funeral rites in the public burial-grounds, of which there are several outside the town. These cemeteries are denominated Kraabaallah, and the population of a large city may be presumed on by the number of these dispersed in the suburbs. They do not bury their dead in the vicinity of a mosque, which is held too sacred to be allowed the pollution. Any one having only touched a dead body, must bathe prior to entering the mosque, or performing their usual prayer-service at home;—such is the veneration they entertain for the name of God.

The opulent people of Mussulmaun society have an Emaum-baarah erected in the range of buildings exclusively denominated murdanah (men's abode). The habitation of all Mussulmauns being composed of separate departments,

for the males and the females, communicating by private entrances, as will be explained hereafter.

The Emaum-baarah is a sacred place, erected for the express purpose of commemorating Mahurrum; the founder not unfrequently intends this also as the mausoleum for himself and family. But we generally find Mukhburrahs (mausoleums) built in conspicuous situations, for the remains of kings, princes, nobles, and sainted persons. Of the latter, many are visited, at stated periods, by the multitude, with religious veneration, the illiterate attaching considerable importance to the annual pilgrimage to them; and where,—to secure the influence of the particular saint's spirit, in furthering their views,—mothers present their children, in numbers beyond all calculation; and each having something to hope for who visits the shrine, presents offerings of money and sweetmeats, which become the property of the person in charge of the tomb, thus yielding him a profitable sinecure, in proportion as the saint is popular amongst the ignorant.

An Emaum-baarah is a square building, generally erected with a cupola top, the dimensions

guided by the circumstances of the founder. The floor is matted with the date-leaf mats, in common use in India, on which is spread a shutteringhie (cotton carpet), and over this a clean white calico covering, on which the assembled party are seated, during the several periods of collecting together to remember their leaders: these meetings are termed Mudgelluss (mourning assemblies). It would be esteemed indecorous or disrespectful to the Emaums, if any one in error, called these assemblies Moollakhaut, the usual term for mere worldly visiting.

The Tazia is placed against the wall on the side facing Mecca, under a canopy of rich embroidery. A reading-desk, or pulpit (mhembur), is placed in a convenient situation, for the reader to face Mecca, and his voice to be heard by the whole assembly of people; it is constructed of silver, ivory, ebony, &c. to correspond with the Tazia, if possible: the steps are covered sometimes with gold-cloth, or broad-cloth of black, or green, if a Syaad's property, being the colour worn by that race for mourning. The shape of a mhembur is a flight

of steps with a flat top, without any railing or enclosed place; the reader, in his recitings, occasionally sitting on the steps, or standing, as may be most convenient to himself.

On the walls of the Emaum-baarah, mirrors and looking-glasses are fixed in suitable situations to give effect to the brilliant display of light, from the magnificent chandeliers suspended from the cupola and cornices. The nobles and the wealthy are excited with a desire to emulate each other in the splendour of their display on these occasions;—all the mirrors, glass, lustres, chandeliers, &c. are brought together to this place, from their several stations in the mansion; and it is due to them to admit the effect to be often imposingly grand, and the blaze of light splendid. I have frequently been reminded in these scenes of the visionary castles conjured to the imagination, whilst reading "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments."

On each side the Tazia,—the whole length of the wall,—banners are ranged, in great variety of colour and fabric; some of them are costly and splendid. I have seen many constructed

of the richest embroidery, on silk grounds, of gold and silver, with massy gold fringes, cords, and tassels; the staff is cased with gold or silver, worked into figures of birds and other animals, in every variety; the top of which has a crest, in some a spread hand,* in others a sort of plume, and not unfrequently a crest resembling a grenade, formed of the precious metals, and set with stones of great value.

On the base of the Tazia the several articles are placed conceived likely to have been used by Hosein at Kraabaallah; a turban of gold or silver tissue, a splendid sword and belt, the handle and hilt set with precious stones, a shield, the Arabian bow and arrows. These ancient emblems of royalty are indispensable in order to do honour to Hosein, in the view they take of his sovereign right to be the head or leader of the true Mussulmauns. Wax lights, red and green, are also placed in great numbers

* The spread hand designates the Sheah sect.—There are times when holding up the spread hand declares the Sheah, whilst the Soonie is distinguished by his holding up three fingers only. In villages, the spread hand is marked on the walls where Sheahs reside during Mahurrum.

about its base, in silver or glass candlesticks; and censers of gold and silver, burning incense perpetually during Mahurrum. Many other minor tributes to the Emaums are discovered near the Tazia, as choice fruits and garlands of sweet-scented flowers, the offerings of ladies of the family to their relative's Tazia.

Amongst the poorer classes of the people an equal proportion of zealous spirit is evinced; and according to their several abilities, so they commemorate the period, interesting alike to all. Those who cannot compass the real splendour of an Emaum-baarah, are satisfied with an imitative one in the best hall their habitation affords; and, where mirrors and chandeliers are not available, they are content to do honour to the Emaums with lamps of uberuck, which in truth are pleasing substitutes at a small price: these lamps are made in a variety of pretty shapes, curiously painted, and ingeniously ornamented with cut paper; they burn oil in them, and, when well arranged, and diversified with their wonted taste, produce a good light, and pleasing effect.

The banners of Hosein, in the houses of the poor, are formed of materials according to their humble means, from tinsel imitations down to dyed muslin; and a similar difference is to be perceived in their selection of the metal of which their crests are made.

Mourning assemblies are held in the Emaum-baarahs twice every day during Mahurrum; those of the evening, however, are the most attractive, and have the fullest attendance of visitors. The master of the house at the appointed hour, takes his seat on the floor near the pulpit, surrounded by the males of his family and intimate friends, and the crowd of strangers arrange themselves—wherever there is sitting room—without impeding the view of the Tazia.

One of the most popular Maulvees of the age is engaged to recite the particular portion appointed for each day, from the manuscript documents, called Dhie Mudgelluss,* in the Persian language. This work is in ten parts, and contains a subject for each day's

* From Dhie, ten; Mudgelluss, assembling together for sacred purposes.

service, descriptive of the life and sufferings of the Emaums, their friends, and children, particularly as regards the eventful period of Mahurrum in which they were engaged. It is, I am assured, a pathetic, fine composition, and a faithful narrative of each particular circumstance in the history of their leaders, the heroic bravery of their friends, &c. They are particularly anxious to engage an eloquent reader for this part of the performance, who, by his impressive manner compels his hearers to sympathise in the affecting incidents which are recited by him.

I have been present when the effect produced by the superior oratory and gestures of a Maulvee has almost terrified me, the profound grief, evinced in his tears and groans, being piercing and apparently sincere. I have even witnessed blood issuing from the breast of sturdy men, who beat themselves simultaneously as they ejaculated the names "Hasan!" "Hosein!" for ten minutes, and occasionally during a longer period, in that part of the service called Mortem.

The portion of Dhie Mudgelluss concluded, sherbet is handed round to the assembly; and as they voluntarily abstain from luxuries at this season, a substitute for pawn—the green leaf in general use amongst the natives—has been introduced, consisting of dried coffee, cocoa-nut shreds, betel-nut, cardimun's, dunyah, and a proportionate quantity of tobacco-leaf and lime; these are mixed together and handed to the visitors, on small silver trays. The hookha is introduced to the superiors of the assembly; you are perhaps aware that inferiors do not smoke in the presence of superiors without their command or permission.

This ceremony terminated, the Murseeah is chanted, by several well-practised voices, with good effect. This part of the service is, perhaps, the most impressive, as the very ignorant, even, can comprehend every word,—the Murseeah being in the Hindoostanie tongue, a poetical composition of great merit, and embracing all the subjects they meet to commemorate. The whole assembly rise up afterwards, and, as with

one voice, recount the names of the lawful leaders after Mahumud, entreating blessings and peace to their souls. They then repeat the names of the hated usurpers (Caliphas), on whose memory they invoke curses, &c. Mortem follows, beating of breasts in unison with the voices, and uttering the names of Hasan and Hosein; this performance concludes each day's Mudgelluss, either of the morning or evening.

The ladies celebrate the returning season of Mahurrum with as much spirit and zeal, as the confinement, in which they exist, can possibly admit of. There are but few, and those chiefly princesses, who have Emaum-baarahs at command, within the boundary of the zeenahnah; the largest and best apartment in their establishment is therefore selected for the purpose of an Emaum-baarah, into which none but females are admitted, excepting the husband, father, son, or brother, of the lady; who having, on this occasion, full liberty to invite her female acquaintance, those who are her nearest male relatives even, are not admitted until previous

notice is given, in order that the female guests may secrete themselves from the sight of these relatives of their hostess.

In commemorating this remarkable event in Mussulmaun history, the expressions of grief, manifested by the ladies, are far greater, and appear to me more lasting than with the other sex; indeed, I never could have given credit to the extent of their bewailings, without witnessing, as I have done for many years, the season for tears and profound grief return with the month of Mahurrum. In sorrowing for the martyred Emaums, they seem to forget their private griefs; the bereavement of a beloved object even is almost overlooked in the dutiful remembrance of Hasan and Hosein at this period; and I have had opportunities of observing this triumph of religious feeling in women, who are remarkable for their affectionate attachment to their children, husbands, and parents;—they tell me, "We must not indulge selfish sorrows of our own, whilst the Prophet's family alone have a right to our tears."

The religious zeal of these people is evinced,

likewise, in a stern, systematic, line of privations, during the period of Mahurrum; no one is obliged, by any law, or command; it is voluntary abstinence, on the part of each individual—they impose it on themselves, out of pure pity and respect for their Emaums' well-remembered sufferings. Every thing which constitutes comfort, luxury, or even convenience at other times, on these occasions are rigidly laid aside. The pallungh and the charpoy (the two descriptions of bedsteads in general use), on which the females love to lounge for some hours in the day and night, are removed from their standings, and, in lieu of this comfort, they take their rest on a common date mat, on the floor. The musnud, and all its cushioned luxuries, give place, on this occasion, to the simply matted floor. The indulgence in choice dainties, at other times so necessary to their happiness, is now foregone, and their meal limited, throughout Mahurrum, to the coarsest food,—such as barley bread, rice and peas boiled together (called kutcher), without even the usual additions to make it palatable ketcherie, as

ghee, salt, pepper, and spices; these ingredients being considered by the zealous females too indulgent and luxurious for humble mourners during Mahurrum.

The pawn leaf, another luxury of no small moment to Asiatic tastes, is now banished for the ten days' mourning. A very poor substitute has been adopted, in the mixture described at the gentlemen's assembly—it is called goattur. The truth is, their health would suffer from any long disuse of tobacco-leaf, lime, and a bitter gum, which are in general use with the pawn; the latter is of a warm aromatic nature, and imparts a fine flavour to the other ingredients; but, as it is considered a great indulgence to eat pawn, they abstain from it altogether during Mahurrum;—the mixture, they say, is only allowed for health's sake.

When visitors call on the Mussulmaun ladies at Mahurrum, the goattur is presented on trays, accompanied by bags, neatly embroidered in silver and gold, of many different shapes and patterns, mostly their own work and invention; they are called buttooah and jhaumdanies.

The variety of ornaments, which constitute the great delight of all classes of females in India, are entirely laid aside, from the first hour of Mahurrum, until the period for mourning concludes. I never heard of any people so thoroughly attached to ornaments as the females of India are generally. They are indulged in this foible,—pardonable it may be,—by their husbands and parents. The wealthiness of a family may often be judged by a single glance at the principal lady of the zeenahnah, who seldom omits doing honour to her husband, by a full display of the precious metals, with a great variety of gems or jewels on ordinary occasions. The men of all ranks are proud of their wives' finery; even the poorest, hold in derision all ornament that is not composed of sterling metal, of which they seem excellent judges. The massy chains of gold or silver, the solid bangles for the arms and ancles, the nut (nose-ring) of gold wire, on which is strung a ruby between two pearls, worn only by married women; the joshun (armlet), of silver or gold, often set with precious stones; the

many rings for the fingers, thumbs, and toes, form the daily dress of a lady;—but I must not digress further. These are all removed from the person, as soon as the moon is seen, when the first day of Mahurrum commences; the hair is unloosed from its usual confinement, and allowed to flow in disorder about the person; the coloured pyjaamahs and deputtahs are removed, with every other article of their usual costume, for a suit that, with them, constitutes mourning—some choose black, others grey, slate, or green, and the widow wears white from the day her husband dies.

A widow never alters her style of dress, neither does she wear a single ornament, during her widowhood, which generally lasts with her life. I never heard of one single instance, during my twelve years' residence amongst them, of a widow marrying again—they have no law to prohibit it; and I have known some ladies, whose affianced husbands died before the marriage was concluded, who preferred a life of solitude and prayer, although many other overtures were made.

Many of the rigidly zealous, among the females, mortify themselves by wearing their suit of mourning, during the ten days, without changing; the dress is worn next the skin, and, in very warm weather, must be comfortless after the first day—but so it is; and so many are the varieties of self-inflicted privations, at this period, that my letter might be filled with the observations I have made. I cannot, however, omit to mention my old woman-servant (ayah), whose mode of abstinence, in remembrance of Hosein, is rigidly severe; my influence does not prevail in dissuading her, although I fear the consequences to her health will be seriously felt if she persist in the fulfilment of her self-imposed trial. This poor old creature resolves on not allowing one drop of water, or any liquid, to pass her lips during the ten days' mourning; as she says, "her Emaum, Hosein, and his family, suffered from thirst at Kraabaallah, why should such a creature as she is be indulged with water?" This shows the temper of the people generally;—

my ayah is a very ignorant old woman, yet she respects her Emaum's memory.*

The Tazia, you are to understand, graces the houses of all good Mussulmauns in India, who are not of the sect called Soonies. This model of their Emaum's tomb, is an object of profound respect. Hindoos, even, on approaching the shrine, bow their heads with much solemn gravity;—I often fancied they mistook the Tazia for a Bootkhanah (the house of an idol).

It is creditable to the Mussulmauns, that they do not restrict any profession of people from visiting their assemblies; there is free admission granted when the Emaum-baarah is first lighted up, until the hour of performing the service, when strangers, that is the multitude, are civilly requested to retire. Every one is expected, on entering the outward verandah, to leave their shoes at the threshold of the sanctuary; none but Europeans have any occasion

* After much entreaty, this humble zealot was induced to take a sweet lime, occasionally, to cool her poor parched mouth. She survived the trial, and lived many years to repeat her practised abstinence at the return of Mahurrum.

to be reminded of this, as it is a well known and general observance with all degrees of natives in Asia. The servants, in charge of the Emaum-baarah, are responsible for the due observance of respect to the place, and when any foreigners are advancing, they are politely requested to leave their shoes outside; which must be complied with, or they cannot possibly be admitted.

Some few years since, a party of young gentlemen, from cantonments, had made up their minds to evade the necessity for removing their boots, on the occasion of a visit to one of the great men's Emaum-baarahs, at a Native city; they had provided themselves with white socks, which they drew over their boots before leaving their palkies. The cheat was discovered by the servants in attendance, after they had been admitted; they made a precipitate retreat to avoid the consequences of a representation to the Resident, by the proprietor of the Emaum-baarah; who, hearing of the circumstance, made all possible inquiry, without, however, discovering the names of the gentlemen, who had thus, in his opinion, violated the sanctuary.

The Natives are aware that the Resident sets the bright example of conforming to the observances of the people, over whom he is placed as governor and guardian; and that he very properly discountenances every attempt of his countrymen to infringe on their rights, prejudices, or privileges; and they have, to my knowledge, always looked up to him as to a parent and a friend, from the first to the last day of his exalted station amongst them. Many a tear marked the regret of the Natives, when their best, their kindest, earthly friend quitted the city he had blessed by his presence; and to the latest page of their history, his memory will doubtless be cherished with sincere veneration and respectful attachment.

The poor people vie with their rich neighbours, in making a brilliant light in their little halls containing the Tazia; the very poorest are liberal in the expenditure of oil and tallow candles,—I might say extravagantly so, but for the purity of their intentions, supposing it to be a duty,—and they certainly manifest their zeal and respect to the utmost of their power;

although many, to my knowledge, live all the year round on the very coarsest fare, to enable them to show this reverence to their Emaum's memory.

The ladies assemble, in the evening, round the Tazia they have set up, in their purdahed privacy—female friends, slaves, and servants, surrounding the mistress of the house, in solemn gravity.

The few females, who have been educated, are in great request at this season; they read the Dhie Mudgelluss, and chant the Musseeah with good effect. These women, being hired for the purpose, are detained during the ten days; when the Mahurrum ceases, they are dismissed to their own homes, loaded with the best gifts the good lady their employer can conveniently spare, commensurate with the services performed. These educated females are chiefly daughters of poor Syaads, who have not been married for the lack of a dowry;—they live devoutly in the service of God, according to their faith. They are sometimes required, in the families of the nobility, to

teach the Khoraun to the young ladies, and, in that capacity, they are called Oustaardie, or more familiarly Artoojee.

As I have mentioned before, the Musseah narrative of the sufferings at Kraabaallah, is a really pathetic and interesting composition; the work being conveyed in the language of the country, every word is understood, and very deeply felt, by the females in all these assemblies, who, having their hearts softened by the emphatic chantings of the readers, burst into violent tears and sobbings, of the most heart-rending description. As in the gentlemen's assembly, they conclude with Mortem, in which they exercise themselves until they are actually exhausted; indeed, many delicate females injure their health by the violence and energy of their exertions, which they nevertheless deem a most essential duty to perform, at all hazards, during the continuance of Mahurrum.

This method of keeping Mahurrum is not in strict obedience to the Mahumudan laws; in which code may be found prohibitions against

all violent and excessive grief—tearing the hair, or other expressions of ungovernable sorrow.

I have observed that the Maulvees, Moollahs, and devoutly religious persons, although mixing with the enthusiasts on these occasions, abstain from the violent exhibition of sorrows, which the uninformed are so prone to indulge in. The most religious men of that faith feel equal, perhaps greater sympathy, for the sufferings of the Emaums, than those who are less acquainted with the precepts of the Khoraun; they commemorate the Mahurrum without parade or ostentatious display, and apparently wear mourning on their hearts, with their garb, the full term of forty days,—the common period of mourning for a beloved object;—but these persons never join in Mortem, beating breasts, or other outward show of sadness, although they are present when it is exercised; but their quiet grief is evidently more sincere.

I have conversed with many sensible men of the Mussulmaun persuasion, on the subject of celebrating Mahurrum, and from all I can learn, the pompous display is grown into a

habit, by a long residence amongst people, who make a merit of showy parades at all their festivals. Foreign Mussulmauns are equally surprised as Europeans, when they visit Hindoostaun, and first see the Tazia conveyed about in procession, which would be counted sacrilegious in Persia or Arabia; but here, the ceremony is not complete, without a mixture of pageantry with the deeply expressed and public exposure of their grief.

The remarkable plainness of the mosque, contrasted with the superb decorations of an Emaum-baarah, excited my surprise. I am told by the most venerable of Syaads, "The Mosque is devoted only to the service of God, where it is commanded no worldly attractions or ornaments shall appear, to draw off the mind, or divert the attention, from that one great object for which the house of prayer is intended." An Emaum-baarah is erected for the purpose of doing honour to the memory of the Emaums, and of late years the emulative spirit of individuals has been the great inducement to the display of ornamental decorations.

It is rather from their respect to the Founder of their religion and his descendants, than any part of their profession of faith, that the Mussulmaun population of Hindoostaun are guided by in these displays, which are merely the fashion of other people whom they imitate; and with far different motives to the weak-minded Hindoos, who exalt their idols, whilst the former thus testify their respect to worthy mortals only. This is the explanation I have received from devout Mussulmauns, who direct me to remark the strong similarity,—in habit only, where "the faith" is not liable to innovations,—between themselves and the Hindoo population;—the out-of-door celebrations of marriage festivals, for instance, which are so nearly resembling each other, in the same classes of society, that scarcely any difference can be discovered by the common observer.

Idolatry is hateful to a Mussulmaun, who acknowledges "one only true God," and "him alone to be worshipped." They respect, venerate, love, and would imitate, their acknowledged Prophet and the Emaums, (who succeeded

Mahumud in the mission), but they never worship them, as has been often imagined. On the contrary, they declare to me that their faith compels them "to believe in one God, and that He alone is to be worshipped by the creature; and that Mahumud is a creature, the Prophet sent by God to make his will known, and declare his power. That to bow down and worship Mahumud would be gross idolatry; and, although he is often mentioned in their prayers, yet he is never prayed to. They believe their Prophet is sensible of whatever passes amongst his true disciples; and that, in proportion as they fulfil the commands he was instructed by God to leave with them, so will they derive benefit from his intercession, on that great and awful day, when all mankind shall appear before the judgment seat of God."

LETTER III.

Continuation of Mahurrum.—Consecration of Banners.—Durgah at Lucknow.—Its origin explained.—Regarded with peculiar veneration.—The Nuwaub vows to build a new one.—Its description.—Procession to the Durgah.—Najoomies.—Influence possessed and practised by them.—Eunuchs.—Anecdotes of some having attained great honours and wealth.—Presents bestowed upon them generally revert to the donor.—Rich attire of male and female slaves.

AFTER the Tazia is brought home (as the temporary ones are from the bazaar on the eve of Mahurrum, attended by a ceremonious display of persons, music, flags, flambeaux, &c.), there is little to remark of out-door parade beyond the continual activity of the multitude making the sacred visits to their several Emaum-baarahs, until the fifth day, when the banners are conveyed from each of them in solemn procession, to be consecrated at the

Durgah—(literally translated, "The threshold," or "Entrance, to a sanctified place.")

This custom is perhaps exclusively observed by the inhabitants of Lucknow, where I have had the privilege of acquiring a knowledge of the motives which guide most of their proceedings; and as there is a story attached to the Durgah, not generally known to European visitors, I propose relating it here, as it particularly tends to explain the reasons for the Mussulmauns conveying their banners for consecration to that celebrated shrine.

"A native of India,—I forget his name,—remarkable for his devotion and holy life, undertook the pilgrimage to Mecca; whilst engaged in these duties at the 'holy house,' he was visited with a prophetic dream. Abass Ali (the standard-bearer and relation of Hosein) appeared to him in his dream, commanding him, that as soon as his duties at Mecca were fulfilled he should, without delay, proceed to Kraaba-allah, to the tomb of Hosein; directing him, with great precision, how he was to find the exact spot of earth where was deposited the

very Allum (banner) of Hosein, which he (Abass Ali) had, on the great day of Kraaba-allah, carried to the field. The man was further instructed to possess himself of this relic secretly, and convey it about his person until he should reach his native country, when he would be more fully directed by the orderings of Providence how the relic should be disposed of.

"The Hadjee followed all the injunctions he had received punctually; the exact spot was easily discovered, by the impressions from his dream; and, fearing the jealousy of the Arabs, he used the utmost precaution, working by night, to secure to himself the possession of so inestimable a prize, without exciting their suspicion, or attracting the notice of the numerous pilgrims who thronged the shrine by day. After several nights of severe labour he discovered, to his great joy, the metal crest of the banner; and concluding the banner and staff to have mouldered away, from their having been so long entombed in the earth, he cautiously secreted the crest about his person, and after enduring the many vicissitudes and priva-

tions, attendant on the long journey from Arabia to India, he finally succeeded in reaching Lucknow in safety with his prize.

"The Nuwaub Asof ood Duolah, ruled at this period in Oude; the pilgrim made his adventures known to him, narrating his dream, and the circumstances which led to his gaining possession of the crest. The Nuwaub gave full credence to his story, and became the holder of the relic himself, rewarding the Hadjee handsomely for his trouble, and gave immediate orders for a small building to be erected under the denomination of 'Huzerut Abass Ali Ke Durgah,' in which the crest was safely deposited with due honours, and the fortunate pilgrim was appointed guardian with a liberal salary.

"In the course of time, this Durgah grew into great repute amongst the general classes of the Mussulmaun population, who, venerating their Emaum Hosein, had more than common respect for this trifle, which they believed had been used in his personal service. Here the public were permitted to offer their sacrifices

and oblations to God, on occasions of importance to themselves; as after the performance of the rite of circumcision in particular, grand processions were formed conveying the youthful Mussulmaun, richly attired, attended by music, &c. and offering presents of money and sweetmeats at the shrine which contains their Emaum's sacred relic. On these occasions the beggars of every denomination were benefited by the liberality of the grateful father, and the offerings at the shrine became the property of the guardian of the Durgah, who, it was expected, would deal out from his receipts to the necessitous as occasions served.

"This custom is still observed, with equal veneration for the shrine and its deposit; and when a lady recovers from the perils attendant on giving to her husband's house a desired heir, she is conveyed, with all the pomp and parade due to her rank in life to this Durgah, attended by her female relatives, friends, domestics, eunuchs, and slaves, in covered conveyances; in her train are gentlemen on horseback, in palkies, or on elephants, to do honour to

the joyful event; the Guardian's wife having charge on these occasions of the ladies' visits; and the Guardian with the gentlemen and all the males, guarding the sanctuary outside; for they are not permitted to enter whilst it is occupied by the ladies, the eunuchs alone having that privilege where females congregate.

Recovery from sickness, preservation from any grievous calamity, danger, or other event which excites grateful feelings, are the usual inducements to visiting the Durgah, with both males and females, amongst the Mussulmaun population of Lucknow. These recurrences yield ample stores of cash, clothes, &c. left at the disposal of the Guardian, who, if a good man, disperses these charitable donations amongst the indigent with a liberality equal to that of the donors in their various offerings.

The Durgah had grown into general respect, when a certain reigning Nuwaub was afflicted by a severe and tedious illness, which baffled the skill of his physicians, and resisted the power of the medicine resorted to for his recovery. A

confidential Najoom* (astrologer,) in the service of his Highness, of great repute in his profession, advised his master to make a vow, that "If in the wisdom of Divine Providence his health should be restored, he would build a new Durgah on the site of the old one, to be dedicated to Abass Ali, and to be the shrine for the sacred deposit of the crest of Hosein." The Nuwaub, it appears, recovered rapidly after the vow had been made, and he went in great pomp and state to return thanks to God in this Durgah, surrounded by the nobles and officers of his Court, and the whole strength of his establishment accompanied him on the occasion. So grand was the spectacle, that the old people of the city talk of it at this day as a scene never equalled in the annals of Lucknow, for splendour and magnificence; immense sums of money were distributed on the road to the populace, and at the Durgah; the multitude, of all classes, hailing his emancipation from the couch of sickness with deafening cheers of vociferous exultation.

* See Postscript, p. 69.

In fulfilment of his vow, the Nuwaub gave immediate orders for erecting the magnificent edifice, which now graces the suburbs of Lucknow, about five miles from that part of the city usually occupied by the Sovereign Ruler of the province of Oude. By virtue of the Nuwaub's vow and recovery, the before-respected Durgah has, thus newly built, increased in favour with the public; and, on account of the veneration they have for all that concerns their Emaums, the banners which adorn the Tazias of Hosein must be consecrated by being brought to this sacred edifice; where, by the condescending permission of the Sovereign, both the rich and the poor are with equal favour admitted, at that interesting period of Mahurrum, to view the crest of their Leader, and present their own banners to be touched and thus hallowed by the, to them, sacred relic. The crest is fixed to a staff, but no banner attached to it; this is placed within a high railing, supported by a platform, in the centre of the building; on either side splendid banners are exhibited on these occasions.

The Durgah is a square building, entered by flights of steps from the court-yard; the banner of each person is conveyed through the right entrance, opposite the platform, where it is immediately presented to touch the revered crest; this is only the work of a few seconds; that party walks on, and moves out to the left again into the court-yard; the next follows in rapid succession, and so on till all have performed this duty: by this arrangement, confusion is obviated; and, in the course of the day, perhaps forty or fifty thousand banners may have touched the Emaum's consecrated crest. On these occasions, the vast population of Lucknow may be imagined by the almost countless multitude, of every rank, who visit this Durgah: there is no tax levied on the people, but the sums collected must be immense, since every one conscientiously offers something, according to his inclination or his means, out of pure respect to the memory of Hosein.

The order of procession, appointed by each noble proprietor of banners, to be consecrated

at the Durgah, forms a grand spectacle. There is no material difference in their countless numbers; the most wealthy and the meanest subject of the province make displays commensurate with their ability, whilst those persons who make the most costly exhibitions enjoy the greatest share of popular favour, as it is considered a proof of their desire to do honour to the memory of Hosein and Hasan, their venerated Emaums.

A description of one, just passing my house, will give you a general idea of these processions, —it belongs to a rich man of the city:—A guard of soldiers surrounds four elephants, on which several men are seated, on pads or cushions, supporting the banners; the staffs of several are of silver,—the spread hand, and other crests, are formed of the same metal, set with precious stones. Each banner—they all resemble—is in the shape of a long scarf of rich silk, of bright florid colours, embroidered very deep at the ends, which are finished with gold and silver bullion fringes; it is caught together near the middle, and tied with rich gold and

silver cords and tassels to the top of the staff, just under the hand or crest. The silks, I observe, are of many different colours, forming an agréeable variety, some blue, purple, green, yellow, &c. Red is not used; being the Soonies' distinguishing colour at Mahurrum it is carefully avoided by the zealous Sheahs—the Soonies are violently opposed to the celebration of this festival. After the elephants, a band of music follows, composed of every variety of Native instruments, with drums and fifes; the trumpets strike me as the greatest novelty in their band; some of them are very long, and powerful in their effect.

Next in the order of procession I observe a man in deep mourning, supporting a black pole, on which two swords are suspended from a bow reversed—the swords unsheathed glittering in the sun. The person who owns the banners, or his deputy, follows next on foot, attended by readers of the Musseeah, and a large party of friends in mourning. The readers select such passages as are particularly applicable to the part Abass Ali took in the affair at Kraabaallah,

which is chanted at intervals, the procession pausing for that purpose.

Then comes Dhull Dhull,—the name of Hosein's horse at Kraabaallah;—that selected for the present purpose is a handsome white Arab, caparisoned according to the olden style of Arabia: due care is taken to represent the probable sufferings of both animal and rider, by the bloody horsecloth—the red-stained legs—and the arrows apparently sticking in several parts of his body; on the saddle is fixed a turban in the Arabian style, with the bow and arrows; —the bridle, &c. are of very rich embroidery; the stirrups and mountings of solid silver. The horse and all its attire are given after Mahurrum, in charity, to a poor Syaad. Footmen, with the afthaadah and chowrie—peculiar emblems of royalty in India—attend Dhull Dhull. The friends of the family walk near the horse; then servants of all classes, to fill up the parade, and many foot soldiers, who occasionally fire singly, giving to the whole description a military effect.

I have seen many other processions on these

fifth days of Mahurrum; they all partake of one style,—some more splendid than others; and the very poor people parade their banners, with, perhaps, no other accompaniment than a single drum and fife, and the owner supporting his own banner.

My next letter will contain the procession of Mayndhie, which forms a grand feature of Mahurrum display on the seventh night.

P.S.—The Najoomee are men generally with some learning, who, for their supposed skill in astrology, have, in all ages since Mahumud's death, been more or less courted and venerated by the Mussulmaun people;—I should say, with those who have not the fear of God stronger in their hearts than the love of the world and its vanities;—the really religious people discountenance the whole system and pretended art of the astrologer.

It is wonderful the influence a Najoom acquires in the houses of many great men in India;—wherever one of these idlers is entertained he is the oracle to be consulted on all occa-

sions, whether the required solution be of the utmost importance, or the merest trifling subject. I know those who submit, with a childlike docility, to the Najoom's opinion, when their better reason, if allowed to sway, would decide against the astrologer's prediction. If Najoom says it is not proper for Nuwaub Sahib, or his Begum, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to take medicine, to go from home, to give away or accept a gift, or any other action which human reason is the best guide to decide upon, Najoom has said it,—and Najoom must be right. Najoom can make peace or war, in the family he overrules, at his pleasure; and many are the houses divided against themselves by the wicked influence of a bad man, thus exercising his crafty wiles over the weakness of his credulous master. —So much for Najoomee; and now for my second notice of the Eunuchs:—

They are in great request among the highest order of people, and from their long sojourn in a family, this class of beings are generally faithfully attached to the interest and welfare of their employer; they are much in the confidence

of their master and mistress, and very seldom betray their trust. Being frequently purchased, whilst children, from the base wretches who have stolen them in infancy from the parental roof, they often grow up to a good old age with the family by whom they are adopted; they enjoy many privileges denied to other classes of slaves;—are admitted at all hours and seasons to the zeenahnahs; and often, by the liberality of their patrons, become rich and honourable;—still "he is but a slave," and when he dies, his property reverts to his owner.

In Oude there have been many instances of Eunuchs arriving to great honour, distinctions, and vast possessions. Al Mauss Ali Khaun was of the number, within the recollection of many who survive him; he was the favoured Eunuch of the House of Oude; a person of great attainments, and gifted with a remarkably superior mind, he was appointed Collector over an immense tract of country, by the then reigning Nuwaub, whose councils he benefited by his great judgment. He lived to a good old age, in the unlimited confidence of his prince, and en-

joyed the good will and affection of all who could appreciate what is valuable in honest integrity. He died as he had lived, in the most perfect resignation to whatever was the will of God, in whose mercy he trusted through time, and for eternity. Many of the old inhabitants speak of him with veneration and respect, declaring he was the perfect pattern for good Mussulmauns to imitate.

Another remarkable Eunuch, Affrine Khaun, of the Court of Oude, is well remembered in the present generation also,—the poor having lost a kind benefactor, and the rich a sensible companion, by his death. His vast property he had willed to others than the sovereign ruler of Oude (whose property he actually was), who sent, as is usual in these cases, to take possession of his estate, immediately after his death; the gates were barred, and the heirs the Eunuch had chosen to his immense wealth had taken possession; which I am not aware was disputed afterwards by the reigning Nuwaub, although by right of the Mussulmaun law, the Nuwaub owned both the slave and the slave's wealth.

This accounts, perhaps, for the common practice in the higher circles of the Mussulmaun population, of heaping ornaments and riches on favourite slaves; the wealth thus expended at one time, is but a loan in the hands of safe keepers, to revert again to the original proprietor whenever required by the master, or no longer of service to the slave, who has neither power to bestow, nor heirs to benefit from the property he may leave when he dies.

I have frequently observed, among the most exalted ladies, that their female slaves are very often superbly dressed; and, on occasions of marriage ceremonies, or other scenes of festivity, they seem proud of taking them in their suite, handsomely dressed, and richly adorned with the precious metals, in armlets, bangles, chains, &c.; the lady thus adding to her own consequence by the display of her attendant slaves. The same may be observed with regard to gentlemen, who have men-slaves attending them, and who are very frequently attired in costly dresses, expensive shawls, and gold ornaments.

LETTER IV.

Mahurrum concluded.—Night of Mayndhie.—Emaum-baarah of the King of Oude.—Procession to Shaah Nudghiff.—Last day of Mahurrum.—Chattahs.—Musical instruments.—Zeal of the Native gentlemen.—Funeral obsequies over the Tazia at Kraabaallah.—Sentiments of devout Mussulmauns.—The fast followed by acts of charity.—Remarks on the observance of Mahurrum.

THE public display on the seventh Mahurrum is by torch-light, and called the night of Mayndhie, intending to represent the marriage ceremony for Cossum, who, it will be remembered, in the sketch of the events of Kraabaallah, was married to his cousin Sakeena Koobraah, the favourite daughter of Hosein, on the morning of the celebrated battle.

This night presents to the public all the outward and showy parade which marks the Mayndhie procession of a real wedding ceremony, of

which I propose speaking further in another place. This display at Mahurrum is attended with considerable expense; consequently, the very rich only observe the out-door formalities to be exhibited on this occasion; yet all classes, according to their means, remember the event, and celebrate it at home.

The Mayndhie procession of one great personage, in Native cities, is directed—by previous arrangement—to the Emaum-baarah of a superior. I was present, on one occasion, when the Mayndhie of the Prime Minister of Oude was sent to the King's Emaum-baarah, called Shaah Nudghiff,*—from the mausoleum of Ali, of which it is an exact representation, on a small scale.

It is situated near the banks of the river Goomtie, some distance from the palace at Lucknow; the entrance to the outer court, or quadrangle, is by a handsome gateway of brick-work plastered and polished, resembling marble. On each side of the gateway, and carried up

* This edifice was built under the superintendance of Ghauzee ood deen Hyder, first King of Oude; and it is here his remains are deposited. May his soul rest in peace!

the two sides, in a line with the building, are distinct apartments, designed for the abode of the distressed and houseless poor; the back of these apartments form a substantial wall or enclosure. The Shaah Nudghiff faces the gateway, and appears to be a square building, on a broad base of flights of steps, with a cupola roof; the interior is paved with black and white marble tesselated, the walls and dome neatly ornamented with plaster and gold in relief, the beading, cornices, &c. of gold, to correspond on a stone-colour ground. The cupola and cornices on the outside are richly ornamented with plaster designs, relieved with gold; on the summit of the dome is placed a crown of pure silver, gilt, of an immense size.

The decorations of the interior, for the season of Mahurrum, were on a scale of grandeur not easily to be conveyed by description. The walls were well covered with handsome glasses and mirrors; the splendid chandeliers,—one containing a hundred wax lights,—in every variety, and relieved with coloured lamps—amber, blue, and green,—mellowing the light, and

giving a fairy-like effect to the brilliant scene. In the centre of the building stood the green glass Tazia, surrounded by wax lights; on the right of which was placed an immense lion, and on the left, a fish,* both formed of the same bright emerald-green glass as the Tazia. The richness and elegance of the banners,—which were numerous and well arranged,—could be equalled only by the costliness of their several mountings.

In Asiatic buildings niches and recesses prevail in all convenient situations, and here they are appropriated for the reception of the relics of antiquity and curiosities; such as models of Mecca, the tent of Hosein, the gate of Kraabaallah, &c.; these three are made of pure silver, and rest on tables of the same metal.

* The fish is a symbol of sovereignty, or authority emanating from the sovereign, in Hindoostaun, since the period of Timour.—Possessors of Jaghires, Collectors of Districts, &c., have permission to use the fish, in the decorations on their flags, in the way similar to our armorial bearings. In Oude the fish is represented in many useful articles—pleasure boats, carriages, &c. Some of the King's Chobdhaars carry a staff representing a gold or silver fish.

Many curious sabres, of all ages, shields, chain armour of the ancients, lances, &c., arranged with much taste, adorn the interior.

The pulpit (mhembur) is of silver, and of very handsome workmanship; the whole of the fitting up and arrangements had been made under the eye of his Majesty, and to his good taste may be ascribed all the merit of the well-ordered display for these occasions. He delighted in visiting this place, which he not only designed as a tribute of his respect to the Emaums, but as the future repository for his own remains, when this world should cease to be his place of joy, or anxious care. His intention has been fulfilled—he died in 1827, aged fifty years, much and justly beloved and regretted by all who knew him; his funeral obsequies were impressively grand, according to Mussulmaun custom. This good and amiable King was succeeded by his only son Nusseer ood deen Hyder, who had just completed his twenty-second year when he began to reign.

On the evening of Mayndhie, the crowds of admiring people were admitted to view their

Paidshah's (King's) exhibition; until the distant sounds of musketry announced the approach of the spectacle, when the multitude were desired to quit the Emaum-baarah. Hundreds still lingering, could not be prevailed on to depart, except by the stripes dealt out unsparingly from the whips of the hurkaarahs and peons, appointed to keep order on the occasion. The place cleared, and quiet restored, I had leisure to view the fairy-like palace of splendour, before the bustle of the procession reached the building. I could hardly persuade myself the picture before me was not a dream, instead of a reality.

I stood at the entrance to watch the approach of the minister's train, through the gateway into the illuminated quadrangle. Spacious as this court-yard is, it was nearly filled with the many people forming the Mayndhie parade. I should imagine there could not be less than three thousand souls engaged in this service, including the match-lock soldiery. Several trays of Mayndhie are brought, with the other requisites for the usual forms of marriage gifts, such

as sweetmeats, dried fruits, garlands of sweet jasmine, imitative beds of flowers, composed of uberuck: in some of the flowers, fireworks were concealed, to be let off in the quadrangle. An imitative tomb on a bier, is also paraded, together with the palkie and chundole of silver, which are the covered conveyances for females of the royal family, or such of the nobility as are privileged by grants from the crown; all other females use the covered palkie, mahanah, dhollee, and the rutt. Several bands of music follow, and torches out of number. The elephants, camels, cavalry, &c., are left in the open space, outside the gateway—the gentlemen, dismounting, enter with Dhull Dhull and the trays of Mayndhie.

I trembled for the probable destruction of the brilliant ornaments in the Emaum-baarah, when I heard the noble animal was to make the circuit round the Tazia. Dhull Dhull, being led in, went up the steps with little difficulty; and to my astonishment, the gentle creature paced the tesselated floor, in very slow time, without once slipping, or seeming

concerned at the novelty of his situation; indeed, this docile animal seemed to me the only living thing present that felt no interest in the scene—rendered more attractive and conspicuous by the gentle manners of the pretty Dhull Dhull himself. The circuit being made, he was conducted back into the court-yard, without the slightest accident or confusion occurring during his visit to the Emaum-baarah.

The model of the tomb of Cossum, the chundole and palkie, the trays of Mayndhie, sweetmeats, &c. were deposited here until the tenth day, when they accompany the King's temporary Tazia cavalcade to Kraabaallah for interment.

The ceremonies performed on this night of Mayndhie resemble, in every particular, those of the same rank of persons on the actual solemnization of a wedding, even to the distribution of money amongst the populace who crowd in multitudes on such occasions, though apparently more eager for the prize than the sight.

The most imposing spectacle in the celebration of Mahurrum, is reserved for the last day;

and, judging from the activity of all classes, the zealous exertions of the multitude, the deep interest marked on every face, male and female, a mere spectator might well imagine this morning to be of more importance than any other in the Mussulmaun's catalogue of days.

At the earliest hour of the dawning day, the preparations for the march being complete,—which had occupied the hours usually devoted to sleep,—the streets and roads present a very animated picture. From the bustle and outpouring of the multitude, on this one absorbing engagement, a stranger might be led back in imagination to the flight from Egypt, the object, however, is very different from that of the children of Israel. The order of the day being to commemorate the death of Hosein, a grand military funeral is pourtrayed in each person's cavalcade, all pressing forward to their chosen Kraabaallah,—the poor man, with his humble Tazia and flags, falling in the rear of the more affluent person's display, as well for protection as for speed. There is so much of similarity in these processions, that the description of one

will be sufficient to convey the idea of the whole, as they pass on in succession to the chosen place of burial.

The consecrated banners take the precedence, in the order of march, carried by men on elephants; then a band of music. Next comes the jillewdhar (sword-bearer), supporting, on a black staff, the bow reversed, with brilliant swords suspended; on each side of him are men bearing black poles, on which are fixed immense long streamers of black unspun silk,—designed to symbolize grief, despair, &c.

Then follows the horse, caparisoned as on the day of consecrating the banners; it is attended by servants, in the same order as when a prince rides out,—viz. a man with the afthaadah* (or sun),—the well-dressed grooms, holding the bridle rein on either side,—a man with

* The afthaadah is a sun embroidered on crimson velvet, both sides the same, and fixed on a circular framework, about two yards in circumference; this is attached to a silver or gold staff, the circle deeply and fully flounced with gold brocade, or rich silk bound with silver ribands. The person riding is sheltered from the rays of the sun by the afthaadah being carried in an elevated position.

the chowrie of peacock's feathers in a silver handle,—chobdhaahs, with long silver and gold staffs,—sota badhaahs, with short staffs resembling fish, of the same materials,—hurkaarahs (running-footmen, or messengers), bearing small triangular banners with silver handles,—shoe-bearers, &c.

The royal chattah (umbrella), of embroidered velvet, is supported over the head of Dhull Dhull. This article in its plain garb, so generally used in Europe, is, in Hindoostaun, an original distinguishing mark of royalty, gracing the King's throne in lieu of a canopy. In Oude, the chattah cannot be used by the subject when in view of the sovereign; if the King's dunkah be heard abroad, the people hide their chattahs, and even descend from their carriages, elephants, horses, or palkies, standing with their hands folded, in all humility, to make obeisance to the King,—resuming them only when the royal cortege has moved out of sight. I have known many of the first nobility in the Court of Oude, and English gentlemen in the King's suite, exposed to the rays of the

morning sun, during the hottest season of the year; in these airings, the King alone has the benefit of a chattah, except the Resident happens to be of the party, who being always received as an equal, is privileged to the chattah, the chowrie, and the hookha; indulgences of which those only who have lived in India can possibly estimate the true value.

But to my subject:—The saddle is adorned with Hosein's chain armour, gold turban, a richly set sword, with an embroidered belt: some of the family and friends attend respectfully near the horse. Then follow the bearers of incense, in gold and silver censers, suspended to chains, which they wave about, fumigating the air with the refreshing smell of lahbaun, —a sweet-scented resin from the cedar of Lebanon, I imagine, though some suppose it to be the frankincense noticed in Scripture.

Next in the cavalcade is a chanter or reader of the Musseeah, who selects passages from that well-arranged work suited to the time when Hosein's person was the mark for Yuzeed's arrows, and which describe his conduct on the trying

occasion; one or two couplets being chanted, the procession advances in slow time, halting every five minutes on the way from the beginning to the end of the march. The reader is attended by the proprietor of the Tazia display, and his many relatives and friends, bare-footed, and without any covering on their heads;—many of these persons throw chaff on their heads, expressive of grief, and whilst the Musseah is chanted, their boisterous expressions of sorrow are painfully severe to the mere observer of the scene.

The Tazia then follows, surrounded by banners, and covered with a canopy upheld by silver poles in the hands of the supporters, according to the general style of conveying their dead at the funerals of the Mussulmauns. The canopy is of green, bordered and embroidered with gold. The model of Cossum's tomb follows in succession, which is covered with gold cloth, and has a canopy also supported over it, in the same way, by poles carried by several men. The palkie and chundole of silver and tissue are next seen; the trays of Mayndhie,

the flowers of uberuck, and the other paraphernalia of the marriage ceremony, follow in due order. Then the camels and elephants, conveying the tent equipage and luggage of Hosein, form a long train, representing the supposed style of his march from Medina to Kraabaallah.

The last and most judicious feature in the arrangement is the several elephants with confidential servants, distributing bread and money to the poor, who are thus attracted to the rear in countless numbers, leaving the cavalcade in quiet possession of the space of roadway uncrowded by the multitude. The bread given on these occasions is in great esteem amongst the females, who receive a small portion from the followers on their return from Kraabaallah with veneration, for the Emaum's sake, in whose name it is given. I have often been led to the remembrance of past times by this act of theirs, when the cross-buns of Good-Friday were esteemed by the aged women as possessing virtues beyond the mere substance of the cake.

The whole line of march is guarded in each

procession by burkhandhars (matchlock men), who fire singly, at intervals, on the way. Several bands of music are dispersed in the cavalcade, performing solemn dirge-like airs, peculiar to the style of composition in Hindoostaun, and well-suited to the occasion,—muffled drums and shrill trumpets, imitating the reiteration of "Hasan, Hosein," when Mortem is performed. I remember a fine female elephant, belonging to King Ghauzee ood deen Hyder, which had been so well instructed, as to keep time with the soundings from her proboscis with the occasional Mortems. I cannot say that she clearly pronounced the names of the two sons of Ali, yet the regularity of keeping time with the music and the human voices was of itself sufficient to excite admiration,—the Natives declare that she pronounces the names distinctly. Her name is Hoseinie, the feminine of Hosein.

Amongst the many varieties of Native musical instruments I have seen in India, the kettle-drum is the most simple and singular, which I will take the liberty of describing:—

It is of well-baked earth, moulded in the usual way, and very similar in shape to those of the Royal Horse Guards. A globe of the common size, divided into exact halves, would be about the dimension and shape of a pair of Indian manufacture; the parchment is strained over the open mouth, with a thin hoop to fix it firm; the slightest pressure with the fingers on this hoop draws it into tune. The simplicity of this accompaniment to the human voice, when touched by the fingers, very much in the way Europeans use the tambourine is only to be appreciated by those who have been long acquainted with the sound. The only time when it is beaten with sticks is, when used as dunkahs, before the King and Queen, on their appearing in public—a sort of alarum to warn obstructing hackeries, or carriages, to move out of the way.

I have occasionally observed a singular mode of imitating the sound of cavalry going over hard ground, adopted in the processions of great men on the tenth of Mahurrum; the contrivance is called chuckee, and composed of

ebony, or some equally hard wood, the shape and size of a pocket globe, divided into halves; each person, having the pair, beats them with a particular tact on the flat surface, so as to produce the desired sound of horses galloping; and where from fifty to a hundred men, or more, are engaged in this performance, the resemblance may be easily conceived.

There are many little observances, not of sufficient importance to make them general to all who keep Mahurrum, that need not here be detailed;—but one must not be omitted, as it is a feature in the domestic observances of Mussulmauns. On the Tazias, when about to be conveyed to Kraabaallah, I discovered small portions of corn, rice, bread, fruits, flowers, cups of water, &c.;—this is in keeping with the Mussulmaun funerals, who invariably convey food to the tomb with their dead. For the same reason, at Mahurrum, camphor and rosewater are always carried with the Tazia to Kraabaallah, although there is not the same occasion for the articles, as will be observed when the burial service is explained.

I have seen females of rank, with their own hands, place red and green wax lights in front of the Tazia in their halls, on the night of Mayndhie. I was told, in answer to my inquiry, What was meant by the solemn process I had witnessed?—that these ladies had some petition to make, for which they sought the Emaum's intercession at the throne of mercy. The red light was for Hosein, who died in battle; the green for Hasan, who died by poison,—which these colours symbolize; and that those females place great dependance on the fulfilment of their desires, who thus present to their Emaums the wax lights on the night of Mayndhie.

I have remarked that the noblemen and gentlemen generally engaged in the service of celebrating Mahurrum, walk on the tenth morning with their heads bare and their feet uncovered from their homes to the burial ground called Kraabaallah, whatever may be the distance,—perhaps four or five miles,—exposed to the fiery rays of the sun: some persons, who on this occasion are very scrupulous in thus humbling their

nature, walk back again in the same manner, after the funeral ceremony has been duly gone through at Kraabaallah. The magnitude of this undertaking can be only well understood by those who have experienced the state of an atmosphere in the shady rooms of a large house, when the thermometer ranges from eighty-four to eighty-eight, or even ninety degrees; and when, if you venture to the verandah for a few seconds, the flames of heated wind are not only insupportable to Europeans, but frequently produce severe attacks of fever. The luxurious habits of the Eastern great men may be well recollected when counting over the proofs of zeal exhibited in this undertaking, where every selfish consideration for the time is banished. The nobility, (or indeed any one who lays the slightest claim to gentility,) never walk from one house to another during their lives, but at this particular season; even in their gardens indulging in whatever luxury they may boast, by being conveyed round in their palkie, or thonjauns—a chair with poles, supported by bearers. On the tenth day, the

good Mussulmauns rigidly fast until after the third watch; not even a drop of water, or the hookha, enters their mouths;—as they believe Hosein's sufferings only concluded just before the third watch, they cautiously abstain from indulgences, until that hour has passed.

The procession having reached Kraabaallah, the whole ceremony of a funeral is gone through. The Tazia is committed to the grave with equal solemnity to that which is observed when their dead are deposited in the tomb: this occupies some time. I never witnessed the movements at Kraabaallah,—the season of the year, the confusion, and the anticipated feuds between Sheahs and Soonies, ever deterred me from gratifying my curiosity. It is always expected that the bad feelings between the two sects, amongst the lower orders of the people, may produce a real battle on the imitative ground of Kraabaallah; and I have heard of many such terminations of the Mahurrum at Lucknow, where the enthusiastic Sheahs and Soonies—having reserved their long hatred for a favourable opportunity of giving it vent,—have found

an early grave on the very ground to which their Tazia has been consigned. Private quarrels are often reserved for decision on the field of Kraabaallah.

I may here remark, swords form a part of every man's daily costume, from the king to the poorest peasant; save only the devout men, who having forsaken the world have no occasion for a sword. I have often heard them say, "My trust is not resting on a morsel of steel, but on the great mercy of my God."—"What shall I defend? my life? Where is the arm that can assault me without the permission of my God; if He ordains it, should I murmur, or ward off the blow?"—"Is it my worldly goods I am to defend? From whose bounty have I received them? Is not the great Giver able to defend His gifts? and if He wills that I should lose them, what shall I say, but as Yoube (Job) said, 'It is the Lord, to do His own will;' blessed be His great name for ever." These are the sentiments of the devout men of all creeds; and these are likewise the exemplary opinions of some good Mussulmauns I have known in India.

Returned to their home, the rich men are occupied in dispensing benefits among the poor. Food, money, and clothes, are distributed in nearly as great proportions as when they have to mourn over a recent separation by death from a beloved relative. The clothes worn during Mahurrum are never retained for the next occasion, but always distributed amongst the poor, who derive so many advantages from the annual commemoration of Mahurrum, that the philanthropic heart will rather be pleased than vexed at the zeal which produces such a harvest of benefits to the necessitous.

The riches of a native city may be calculated by the immense sums expended at Mahurrum every year; and if no greater advantage be derived from the gorgeous display of the wealthy, than the stimulus to honest industry amongst the several trades, whose labour is brought into use on these occasions, there is enough in the result to excuse the expenditure of surplus cash in apparent trifles. This, however, is strictly the result, not the design, of those expensive displayers at Mahurrum, who are

actuated solely by fervent zeal, in keeping a continued remembrance of the sufferings of their Emaums, and doing honour to their memory.

It is not my province either to praise or condemn, but merely to mark out what I observe of singularity in the habits, manners, and customs of the Mussulmauns, in whose domestic circles I have been so many years a sojourner. On the subject which my pen has faintly traced to your view,—the celebration of Mahurrum, —I cannot refrain from offering one remark; I think them to be actuated by so fervent a zeal, that if they could believe with me, that whatever we do in this life is for Eternity, they would still persevere in this their supposed duty of honouring their Emaums.

LETTER V.

Time.—How divided in Hindoostaun.—Observances after Mahurrum.—Luxuries and enjoyments resumed.—Black dye used by the ladies.—Their nose-ring.—Number of rings worn in their ears.—Mode of dressing their hair.—Aversion to our tooth-brushes.—Toilet of the ladies.—The Pyjaamahs.—The Ungeeah (boddice).—The Courtie.—The Deputtah.—Reception of a superior or elder amongst the ladies.—Their fondness for jewels.—Their shoes.—The state of society amongst the Mussulmaun ladies.—Their conversational endowments.—Remarks upon the fashion and duty of beards.

In my last I alluded to the "third watch;" it will now, perhaps, be necessary to explain the divisions of time, as observed by the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun.

The day is divided into four equal parts, or watches, denominated purrhs; as, first purrh, second purrh, &c. The night is also divided into four purrhs, each of which is subdivided

into ghurries (hours), varying in number with the changes of season; the longest days require eight ghurries to one purrh; the shortest, only six. The same division is observed for the night. The day is reckoned from the earliest dawn to the last decline of light:—there is very little twilight in the Upper Provinces of India.

By this method of calculating time, you will understand that they have no occasion for those useful, correct, mechanical time-keepers, in general use in Europe; but they have a simple method of measuring the hour, by means of a brass vessel, with a small aperture at the bottom, which, being floated on a tank or large pan of water, one drop to a second of time forces its way through the aperture into the floating vessel, on which marks are made outside and in, to direct the number of ghurries by the depth of water drawn into it; and in some places, a certain division of time is marked by the sinking of the vessel. Each hour, as it passes, is struck by the man on duty with a hammer on a broad plate of bell-metal, suspended to the branch of a tree, or to a rail;—the gong of an

English showman at the country fairs, is the exact resemblance of the metal plates used in India for striking the hours on, and must, I think, have been introduced into England from the East.

The durwaun (gate-keeper), or the chokeedhars (watchmen), keep the time. In most establishments the watchmen are on guard two at a time, and are relieved at every watch, day and night. On these men devolves the care of observing the advance of time by the floating vessel, and striking the hour, in which duty they are required to be punctual, as many of the Mussulmauns' services of prayer are scrupulously performed at the appointed hours, which will be more particularly explained when their creed is brought forward in a future Letter; and now, after this digression, I will pursue my subject.

When a member of the Mussulmaun family dies, the master of the house mourns forty days, during which period the razor is laid aside.* In the same manner the devout Mussulmaun mourns every year for his martyred Emaums;

* See Postscript, p. 114.

this, however, is confined to the most religious men; the general practice of the many is to throw off their mourning garb and restore the razor to its duties on the third day after the observances of Mahurrum have terminated.

It is stated, on the authority of ancient Arabian writers, on whose veracity all Mussulmauns rely, that the head of Hosein being taken to Yuzeed, one of his many wives solicited and received the head, which she gave to the family of the martyred leader, who were prisoners to the King, and that they contrived to have it conveyed to Kraabaallah, where it was deposited in the same grave with his body on the fortieth day after the battle.

When a death occurs in a Mussulmaun family, the survivor provides dinners on the third, seventh, and fortieth days succeeding, in memory of the deceased person; these dinners are sent in trays to the immediate relatives and friends of the party, — on which sacred occasion all the poor and the beggars, are sought to share the rich food provided. The like customs are observed for Hosein every year. The third day offering is chiefly com-

posed of sugar, ghee, and flour, and called meettah; it is of the consistence of our rice-puddings, and whether the dainty is sent to a king or a beggar there is but one style in the presentation—all is served in the common brown earthen dish,—in imitation of the humility of Hosein and his family, who seldom used any other in their domestic circle. The dishes of meetah are accompanied with the many varieties of bread common to Hindoostaun, without leaven, as sheah-maul, bacherkaunie, chapaatie, &c.; the first two have milk and ghee mixed with the flour, and nearly resemble our pie-crust. I must here stay to remark one custom I have observed amongst Natives: they never cook food whilst a dead body remains in the house; as soon as it is known amongst a circle of friends that a person is dead, ready-dressed dinners are forwarded to the house for them, no one fancying he is conferring a kindness, but fulfilling a duty.

The third day after the accomplishment of the Mahurrum ceremonies is a busy time with the inmates of zeenahnahs, when generally the mourning garb is thrown off, and preparations

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commence at an early hour in the morning for bathing and replacing the banished ornaments. Abstinence and privation being no longer deemed meritorious by the Mussulmauns, the pawn —the dear delightful pawn, which constitutes the greatest possible luxury to the Natives,— pours in from the bazaar, to gladden the eye and rejoice the heart of all classes, who after this temporary self-denial enjoy the luxury with increased zest.

Again the missee (a preparation of antimony), is applied to the lips, the gums, and occasionally to the teeth of every married lady, who emulate each other in the rich black produced; —such is the difference of taste as regards beauty;—where we admire the coral hue, with the females of Hindoostaun, Nature is defaced by the application of black dye. The eyelid also is penciled afresh with prepared black, called kaarjil: the chief ingredient in this preparation is lamp-black. The eyebrow is well examined for fear an ill-shaped hair should impair the symmetry of that arch esteemed a beauty in every clime, though all do not, per-

haps, exercise an equal care with Eastern dames to preserve order in its growth. The mayndhie is again applied to the hands and feet which restores the bright red hue deemed so becoming and healthy.

The nose once more is destined to receive the nutt (ring) which designates the married lady; this ring, I have before mentioned, is of gold wire, the pearls and ruby between them are of great value, and I have seen many ladies wear the nutt as large in circumference as the bangle on her wrist, though of course much lighter; it is often worn so large, that at meals they are obliged to hold it apart from the face with the left hand, whilst conveying food to the mouth with the other. This nutt, however, from ancient custom, is indispensable with married women, and though they may find it disagreeable and inconvenient, it cannot possibly be removed, except for Mahurrum, from the day of their marriage until their death or widowhood, without infringing on the originality of their customs, in adhering to which they take so much pride.

The ears of the females are pierced in many places; the gold or silver rings return to their several stations after Mahurrum, forming a broad fringe of the precious metals on each side the head; but when they dress for great events, —as paying visits or receiving company,—these give place to strings of pearls and emeralds, which fall in rows from the upper part of the ear to the shoulder in a graceful, elegant style. My ayah, a very plain old woman, has no less than ten silver rings in one ear and nine in the other,* each of them having pendant ornaments; indeed, her ears are literally fringed with silver.

After the hair has undergone all the ceremonies of washing, drying, and anointing with the sweet jessamine oil of India, it is drawn with great precision from the forehead to the back, where it is twisted into a queue which generally reaches below the waist; the ends are finished with strips of red silk and silver ribands entwined with the hair, and terminating with a good-sized rosette. The hair is jet black, with-

* They generally adopt an odd number.

out a single variation of tinge, and luxuriantly long and thick, and thus dressed remains for the week,—about the usual interval between their laborious process of bathing;—nor can they conceive the comfort other people find in frequent brushing and combing the hair. Brushes for the head and the teeth have not yet been introduced into Native families, nor is it ever likely they will, unless some other material than pigs' bristles can be rendered available by the manufacturers for the present purposes of brushes. The swine is altogether considered abominable to Mussulmauns; and such is their detestation of the unclean animal, that the most angry epithet from a master to a slave would be to call him "seur!" (swine).

It must not, however, be supposed that the Natives neglect their teeth; they are the most particular people living in this respect, as they never eat or drink without washing their mouths before and after meals; and as a substitute for our tooth-brush, they make a new one every day from the tender branch of a tree or shrub,—as the pomegranate, the neem,

babool, &c. The fresh-broken twig is bruised and made pliant at the extremity, after the bark or rind is stripped from it, and with this the men preserve the enamelled-looking white teeth which excite the admiration of strangers; and which, though often envied, I fancy, are never surpassed by European ingenuity.

As I have rather prematurely introduced the Native ladies' style of dress into this Letter, I may as well conclude the whole business of their toilet under the present head, instead of reserving the detail of the subject for a future Letter when the zeenahnah is to be described, and accordingly proceed to tell you that the ladies' pyjaamahs are formed of rich satin, or gold cloth, goolbudden, or mussheroo (striped washing silks manufactured at Benares), fine chintz,—English manufacture having the preference,—silk or cotton ginghams,—in short, all such materials are used for this article of female dress as are of sufficiently firm texture, down to the white calico of the country, suited to the means of the wearer. By the most fashionable females they are worn very full below the knee, and reach

to the feet which are partially covered by the fulness, the extremity finished and the seams are bound with silver riband; a very broad silver riband binds the top of the pyjaamah; this being double has a zarbund (a silk net cord) run through, by which this part of the dress is confined at the waist. The ends of the zarbund are finished with rich tassels of gold and silver, curiously and expressly made for this purpose, which extend below the knees: for full dress, these tassels are rendered magnificent with pearls and jewels.

One universal shape is adopted in the form of the ungeeah (bodice), which is, however, much varied in the material and ornamental part; some are of gauze or net, muslin, &c. the more transparent in texture the more agreeable to taste, and all are more or less ornamented with spangles and silver trimmings. It is made to fit the bust with great exactness, and to fasten behind with strong cotton cords; the sleeves are very short and tight, and finished with some fanciful embroidery or silver riband. Even the women servants pride themselves on

pretty ungeeahs, and all will strive to have a a little finery about them, however coarse the material it is formed of may happen to be. They are never removed at night but continue to be worn a week together, unless its beauty fades earlier, or the ornamental parts tarnish through extreme heat.

With the ungeeah is worn a transparent courtie (literally translated shirt) of thread net; this covers the waistband of the pyjaamah but does not screen it; the seams and hems are trimmed with silver or gold ribands.

The deputtah is a useful envelope, and the most graceful part of the whole female costume. In shape and size, a large sheet will convey an idea of the deputtah's dimensions; the quality depends on choice or circumstances; the preference is given to our light English manufacture of leno or muslin for every-day wear by gentlewomen; but on gala days, gold and silver gauze tissues are in great request, as is also fine India muslin manufactured at Decca—transparent and soft as the web of the gossamer spider;—this is called shubnum (night dew), from its delicate texture, and is procured at a

great expense, even in India; some deputtahs are formed of gold-worked muslin, English crape, coloured gauze, &c. On ordinary occasions ladies wear them simply bound with silver riband, but for dress they are richly trimmed with embroidery and bullion fringes, which add much to the splendour of the scene, when two or three hundred females are collected together in their assemblies. The deputtah is worn with much original taste on the back of the head, and falls in graceful folds over the person; when standing, it is crossed in front, one end partially screening the figure, the other thrown over the opposite shoulder.

I should say they rarely stand; but when distinguished guests, or their elders amongst relatives, are announced, this mark of respect is never omitted. It is an interesting sight, as they have much ease and grace in their manner, which no tutoring could impart; they rise and arrange their drapery, advance a few steps from their place in the hall, and embrace their visitor thrice in due form, ending by salaaming, with the head bowed very low

towards the ground and the open hand raised to the forehead, three times in succession, with solemnity and dignity.

I have told you, in a former Letter, how many precious ornaments were laid aside on the eve of Mahurrum, and need hardly describe them again. Their fondness for good jewellery perhaps exceeds the same propensity in any other females on the globe: the rude workmanship of Native jewellers is never an object of weighty consideration, provided the precious metals are unalloyed in quality. The same may be remarked in their selection of jewels: pearls of the largest size, even when discoloured or mishapen, are selected in preference to the most regular in form and colour, of a smaller size; large diamonds, having flaws, are often preferred to smaller ones most perfect. The gentlemen are good judges of precious stones, and evince some taste in their style of ornaments; they are worn on their turbans, and in necklaces or harrhs—rings, armlets, &c.; but these are all laid aside at seasons of devotion, when they are restricted wearing, not only ornaments, but mixed articles of silk and wool

in their apparel. The most religious men and women invariably abstain from ornamental dress in every way, deeming it frivolous vanity, and inconsistent with that they profess—" to be seeking God, and forsaking worldly things."

The ladies never wear stockings, and only cover the feet with shoes when pacing across their court-yard, which bounds their view and their walks. Nevertheless, there is a fashion and taste about the ladies' shoes, which is productive of much emulation in zeenahnah life;—they are splendidly worked in many patterns, with gold and silver spangles, variously-coloured small seed beads and embroidery—the whole one mass of glittering metal;—they are made with sharp points curling upwards, some nearly reaching half way to the knees, and always worn down at the heel, as dressing slippers; the least costly for their every-day wear are of gold embroidery on velvet; the less opulent condescend to wear tinsel work, and the meanest servants yellow or red cloth with silver binding. The same style of shoes are worn by the males as by the females; I have seen some young men with green shagreen slippers for the

rainy season; these are made with a high heel and look unseemly. The fashion of shoes varies with the times in this country, as well as in others—sometimes it is genteel to have small points to the shoes; at another, the points are long and much curled; but they still retain the preference for pointed shoes whatever be the fashion adopted.

The greatest novelty in the way of shoes, which came under my observation in India, was a pair of silver embroidery, small pointed, and very neatly made: on the points and round the instep small silver bells were fastened, which produced harmony with every step, varied by the quick or more gentle paces of the wearer; these were a present to me from a lady of distinction in Oude. Upon visiting this lady on one occasion, my black silk slippers, which I had left at the entrance (as is the custom here), had most likely attracted the curiosity of the Begum's slaves, for when that lady attended me to the threshold, they could nowhere be found; and I was in danger of being obliged to soil my stockings by walking shoeless to my palkie,

across the court-yard. In this dilemma the lady proffered me the pair here described; I was much amused with the novelty of the exchange, upon stepping into the musical shoes, which, however they may be prized by Native ladies, did not exactly suit my style of dress, nor convenience in walking, although I must always remember the Begum's attention with gratitude.

The ladies' society is by no means insipid or without interest; they are naturally gifted with good sense and politeness, fond of conversation, shrewd in their remarks, and their language is both correct and refined. This, at first, was an enigma to me, considering that their lives are spent in seclusion, and that their education was not conducted on European principles; the mystery, however, has passed away upon an intimate acquaintance with the domestic habits of the people. The men with whom genteel women converse, are generally well educated, and from the naturally inquisitive disposition of the females, not a word escapes the lips of a father, husband, or brother, without an inquiry

as to its meaning, which having once ascertained, is never forgotten, because their attention is not diverted by a variety of pursuits, or vain amusements. The women look up to the opinions of their male relatives with the same respect as children of other climes are accustomed to regard their tutor or governess,—considering every word pronounced as worthy of imitation, and every sentiment expressed, as a guide to their own. Thus the habit of speaking correctly is so familiar to the females of Mussulmaun society, that even women servants, long accustomed to serve in zeenahnahs, may be readily distinguished by their language from the same class of people in attendance on European ladies.

P. S. All good Mussulmauns are expected to wear their beards, by command of the Prophet; so says my informant, who is of "the faith," and wears his beard, in accordance with the injunction of his Lawgiver. In modern times, however, the Mussulmauns have seen fit to modify the strict letter of the law, and we perceive generally, mustachios only reserved on

the upper lip. This ornament is trained with the nicest care amongst the fashionable young men of the present day, and made to creep over the lip at each corner of the mouth with curling points; well-trained mustachios being with them much esteemed.

The religious Mussulmauns become more scrupulous as they advance in knowledge of their faith, when they allow their beards to grow and their heads to be shaven: if the hair turns white —while to look well is an object of interest— a dye is resorted to, composed of mayndhie and indigo, which restores its youthful appearance, and the beard retains its black glossy hue for about six weeks, when the process of dyeing is again made the business of a convenient hour. The vanities of the world ceasing to charm (the heart being fixed on more important subjects), the beard is permitted to retain its natural colour; and, truly, the venerable countenance of an aged Mussulmaun, with a silvery-white beard flowing nearly to his girdle, is a picture that would interest every beholder well acquainted with Bible history.

When the Mussulmaun determines on fulfiling the command of his Lawgiver, in making the pilgrimage to Mecca, the beard is allowed to grow whatever be his age; and this may be considered a badge of their faith, none being admitted at "the Holy House" who have not this passport on their chin.

LETTER VI.

The Mussulmaun religion.—Sectarians.—Their difference of faith.—History of the Soonies.—The Caliphas Omir, Osman, Aboubuker, &c.—Mahumud's parting charge to Ali.—Omir's jealousy of Ali.—The Khoraun.—How compiled.—The Calipha Omir held in detestation.—Creed of the Sheahs.—Funeral service.—Opinions of the Mussulmauns respecting the Millennium.—The foundation of their faith exhibited.—Sentiments of the most devout followers of Mahumud.—Bridge of Sirraat, the Scales, &c. explained.—Emaum Mhidhie.—Prophecy of his reappearance.—Its early fulfilment anticipated.—Discourse with the Meer Hadjee Shaah on this subject.

I DO not presume to offer opinions on the nature, substance, or character, of the Mussulmaun Faith; but confine myself to the mere relation of such facts as I have received from the best possible authority, viz. the religious men who are of that faith, and live in strict accordance with the tenets they profess.

There are two sects of the Mussulmaun per-

suasion, as I have before remarked, viz. the Sheahs and the Soonies. The leaders of the former are called Emaums; and those of the latter Caliphas. The Sheahs acknowledge Ali and his immediate descendants (eleven in number) "the right and only lawful Emaums," in succession, after Mahumud. The Soonies declare the Caliphas—as Omir, Aboubuker, &c.—to be their lawful leaders after Mahumud.

I do not find that there is any great difference in the points of faith between the two sects; they are equally guided by the same laws and ordinances inculcated by Mahumud in the Khoraun;—the Sheahs pursuing the pattern of observances traced out in the life and manners of Ali and his descendants;—and the Soonies taking their examples from the manners of the Caliphas. There is a distinguishing method in ablutions before prayers, and also in the manner of bowing and prostrating in their devotional exercises; this difference, however, has nothing to do with their faith,—the subject and form of their daily prayer is one; but both sects have extra services for particular occasions,

agreeable to the instruction of their favourite leaders. The Namaaz (daily prayer) was taught by Mahumud to his followers, every line of which is religiously reverenced by Mussulmauns, and cannot be altered by sectarian principles.

The Mussulmaun faith is founded on three roots; from these spring, with the Sheahs, six branches; with the Soonies, five. The roots are as follow:—

First.—" There is but one God, self existing; ever was, and ever will be; in Whom is all Power, Majesty, and Dominion; by Whom all things are, and were created. With Whom is neither partner or substance:* and He alone is to be worshipped."

Second.—" The Prophets were all true; and all their writings to be relied on, with a true faith."

Third.—" The resurrection of the dead is certain."

* I have met with the creed of the modern Jews, some time in the course of my life, in Hurd's " History of all Religions;" the belief of the Mussulmauns, as regards the unity of God, strictly coincides with the Jews, described in the four first articles of their creed.

The Sheahs' branches, or emanations, from the three roots of their faith, are as follow:—

1st.—" Namaaz," (prayer five times daily); a necessary duty, never to be omitted.

2nd.—" Rumzaun," (fasting) the whole thirty days of that month; a service acceptable to God from His humble creatures.

3rd.—" The Hadje," (pilgrimage to Mecca); commanded by Mahumud, and therefore to be obeyed.

4th.—" Zuckhaut;" the fortieth portion of all worldly goods, to be set apart every year (an offering to God) for the service of the poor.

5th.—To fight in the road of God, or in His service, against the idolaters.

6th.—To believe that the twelve Emaums were the true and lawful leaders, after Mahumud; to follow in their path, or example, and to succour and defend the Syaads, their descendants.

The Soonies omit the last branch in their profession of faith; with this solitary exception, the creed of the two sects, from all I can understand, is the same. The Sheahs are those who celebrate Mahurrum: in my description of

that event will be seen the zealous partizans of the sect; and here may be introduced with propriety, some account of the opposite party denominated Soonies.

The word Calipha implies the master or head of any trade, profession, or calling,—as the master of the tailors, the head master of a college or school, &c. Omir was the first to usurp the title after Mahumud's death, and to him succeeded Aboubuker, and then Ausmaun (Osman).

Aboubuker may have claimed some relationship to Mahumud;—he was converted by his preaching from idolatry to the faith;—he gave his daughter in marriage to Mahumud, by whom two sons were born to him, Ishmael and Ibrahim. "An angel appeared to Mahumud, saying Which of thy family shall be taken from thee, Oh, Mahumud! such is the command of God; two of thy youth must die, and I am sent to demand of thee whether it is thy wish Ishmael and Ibrahim, thine own sons, shall be taken from this world, or Hasan and Hosein, the sons of Fatima thy daughter?" The historian con-

tinues, after dwelling much on the virtues of the Prophet's only daughter, " Such was the affection of Mahumud for his daughter Fatima and her children, and so well he knew the purity of their hearts, that he hesitated not a moment in replying, ' If the Lord graciously permits His servant to choose, I freely offer my two sons, Ishmael and Ibrahim; that Hasan and Hosein may live by His mercy.' "

Omir was also a convert to the faith Mahumud taught: he likewise gave a daughter in marriage to Mahumud; by whom, however, the same historian remarks, his house was not peopled. His only daughter, Fatima, lived to add numbers to his family: she was born to him by the pious female (a widow) who was his first wife, and to whom he was united before he commenced his work of conversion. Ali, to whom Fatima was married, was the nephew of Mahumud, and from this union the Syaad race descend to the present day. The Prophet observing real piety in Ali, designed him not only to be the most suitable husband for his amiable daughter, but the best qualified person to be chosen as his successor,

when he should be called by "the hand of death;" and in the most public manner gave charge of his flock to Ali, not long before that event occurred. Mahumud's speech to Ali on that occasion is much reverenced by the Sheah sect;—it has been translated for me by my husband, and is as follows;—

"You, my son, will suffer many persecutions in the cause of religion; many will be the obstructions to your preaching, for I see they are not all as obedient and faithful as yourself. Usurpers of the authority, delegated to you, will arise, whose views are not pure and holy as your own; but let my admonitions dwell on your mind, remember my advice without swerving. The religion I have laboured to teach, is, as yet, but as the buds shooting forth from the tree; tender as they are, the rude blasts of dissension may scatter them to the winds, and leave the parent tree without a leaf:—but suffered to push forth its produce quietly, the hand of Time will ripen and bring to perfection that which has been the business of my awakened life to cultivate. Never, my son, suffer your sword to be unsheathed in the justice of

your cause; I exhort you to bear this injunction on your mind faithfully; whatever may be the provocations you receive, or insults offered to your person,—I know this trial is in store for my son,—remember the cause you are engaged in; suffer patiently; never draw your sword against the people who profess the true faith, even though they are but by name Mussulmauns.

" Against the enemies of God, I have already given you directions; you may fight for Him—the only true God,—but never against Him, or His faithful servants."

When Mahumud was numbered with the dead, Omir soon set himself forward as the lawful successor; he was of good address, and insinuating manners, and succeeded in drawing " numbers to his threshold." He preached the same doctrine Mahumud had taught, but sensual indulgence and early developed ambition were more strong in his heart than the faith he preached. Omir grew jealous of Ali's virtues and forbearance, under the various trials of oppression and injustice he chose to visit

him with; and resolved that, if possible, he would destroy not only Ali, but his whole family. Omir caused his house to be fired treacherously, but as the historians say, "the mercy of God watched over the sanctified family;" they escaped from the flames, with no other loss than that of their small property.

The Khoraun was not the work of any particular period in the life of Mahumud. It was not compiled into a book until after Mahumud's death, who was totally unacquainted with letters; each chapter having been conveyed by the angel Gabriel to Mahumud, his inspired memory enabled him to repeat, verbatim, the holy messenger's words to his disciples and converts when assembled as was their daily custom. To as many as committed verse, chapter, or portion to memory, by this oral communication, Mahumud rewarded with the highest seats in his assembly (meaning nearest his person); and to those who wished for employment, he gave the command of detachments sent out against the infidels.

The whole Khoraun was thus conveyed to

Mahumud by the angel Gabriel, at many different periods of his mission; and by daily repetition, did he instil into the memory of his followers that mental scripture. But when Omir usurped the right to lead, he ambitiously planned for himself a large share of popularity by causing the Khoraun to be committed to paper, and he accordingly gave orders, that the best scribes should be employed to convey its precepts to writing.

Ali had been engaged in the same employment for some time, perceiving the future benefit to the faith which would accrue from such a labour, and on the very day, when Omir was seated in form to receive the work of his scribes, Ali also presented himself with his version of the Khoraun. It is asserted that Omir treated him with some indignity, and gave the preference to the volume his own scribes had prepared, desiring Ali, nevertheless, to leave that he had transcribed with him, though he candidly told him he never intended it should be "the Book for the People." Ali found, on this trying occasion, the benefit of Mahumud's advice, to

keep his temper subdued for the trial, and withdrew with his book clasped to his heart, assuring Omir, that the volume should only be the property of his descendants; and that when the twelfth Emaum, prophesied by Mahumud, should disappear from the eye of man, the Khoraun he had written, should also disappear, until that Emaum returned, with whom the book he had written should again be found.

The name of Omir is detestable to all lovers of literature, or admirers of ancient history and valuable records. By his orders, the bath was heated with the valuable collection of manuscripts, which it had been the work of ages to complete. Omir was told, that the people valued the writings of the ancients, and that they were displeased at this irreparable destruction of valuable records; he asked if the people were not satisfied with the Khoraun? and if satisfied, why should they seek for other knowledge than that book contained? declaring it to be an useless employment of time, to be engaged in any other readings. They say the collection of books thus destroyed was so vast,

that it served the purpose, to which it was applied, for many successive days. I have thus far given the accounts I have received of the origin of the two sects amongst the Mussulmauns from good authority. My husband says, that in Hindoostaun the two sects may be nearly equal in number; in Persia the Sheahs certainly prevail; in Turkey all are Soonies; and in Arabia the Sheahs are supposed to preponderate. On the whole, perhaps, the two sects are about equally divided.

The Mussulmauns' Creed, of the Sheah sect, is as follows:—

"I believe in one God, supreme over all, and Him alone do I worship.

"I believe that Mahumud was the creature of God, the Creator; I believe that Mahumud was the messenger of God, (the Lord of messengers); and that he was the last of the prophets. I believe that Ali was the chief of the faithful, the head of all the inheritors of the law, and the true leader appointed of God; consequently to be obeyed by the faithful. Also I believe that Hasan and Hosein, the sons of Ali,

and Ali son of Hosein, and Mahumud son of Ali, and Jaufur son of Mahumud, and Moosa son of Jaufur, and Ali son of Moosa, and Mahumud son of Ali, and Ali son of Mahumud, and Hasan son of Ali, and Mhidhie (the standing proof) son of Hasan; the mercy of God be upon them! these were the true leaders of the faithful, and the proof of God was conveyed by them to the people."

This creed is taught to the children of both sexes, in Mussulmaun families, as soon as they are able to talk; and, from the daily repetition, is perfectly familiar to them at an early age.

I propose describing the funeral service here, as the substance of their particular faith is so intimately connected with the appointed service for the dead.

The dead body of a Mussulmaun, in about six hours after life is extinct, is placed in a kuffin (coffin) and conveyed to the place of burial, with parade suited to the rank he held in life.

A tent, or the kaanaut (screen), is pitched in a convenient place, where water is available near to the tomb, for the purpose of washing

and preparing the dead body for interment. They then take the corpse out of the coffin and thoroughly bathe it; when dry, they rub pounded camphor on the hands, feet, knees, and forehead, these parts having, in the method of prostrating at prayer, daily touched the ground; the body is then wrapped neatly in a winding sheet of white calico, on which has been written particular chapters from the Khoraun:* this done, it is taken up with great gentleness and laid in the grave on the side, with the face turned towards Mecca. The officiating Maulvee steps solemnly into the

* The religious man generally prepares his own winding sheet, keeping it always ready, and occasionally taking out this monitor to add another verse or chapter, as the train of thought may have urged at the time. I have seen this done by the Meer Hadjee Shaah, who appropriated a piece of fine white cambric muslin, he had received from me, to this sacred purpose. I have often been a silent observer of my revered friend whilst he was engaged in writing passages from the book whose rules he lived by. The anticipated moment when he should require this his kuffin dress, was never clouded by dread, but always looked forward to with cheerfulness and fervent hope; for he trusted in the mercy of God whom he loved and worshipped.

grave (which is much deeper and wider than ours), and with a loud voice repeats the creed, as before described; after which he says, " These were thy good and holy leaders, O son of Adam! (here he repeats the person's names.) Now when the two angels come unto thee, who are the Maccurrûb* (messengers) from thy great and mighty God, they will ask of thee, 'Who is thy Lord? Who is thy Prophet? What is thy faith? Which is thy book? Where is thy Kiblaah?† Who is thy Leader?'

* Maccurrub means those angels who are at all times privileged to appear in the presence of God;—they are supposed to have eyes of great brilliance. In order that the Mussulmauns may have the reply ready for that awful moment, they have a custom of repeating the responses to the angel every evening, when the lamp is first lighted, as they say this sudden light resembles the angels' eyes. I had noticed the custom for some time, and fancied the Mussulmaun people worshipped light, until I was made acquainted with the real motive for this general observance both with the men and women.

† Kiblaah, is the holy place to which men turn their face when offering up their prayer to God, as the Jews face Jerusalem. Literally, " worshipping place."

"Then shalt thou answer the Maccurrub thus:—

"'God, greatest in glory, is my only Lord; Mahumud, my Prophet; Islaaim, my faith, (Islaaim means true faith); the Khoraun, my book; the Kaubah (Holy House at Mecca), my Kiblaah;

Emaum Ali, son of Aboutalib,

— Hasan and Hosein,

— Ali, surnamed Zynool Auberdene,

— Mahumud, — Baakur,

— Jaufur, — Saadick,

— Moosa, — Khazim,

— Ali, — Reezah,

— Mahumud, — Ul Jawaad,

— Ali, — Ul Hoodah,

— Hasan, — Ul Ushkeree,

— Mhidhie, the standing proof that we are waiting for.

These are all my leaders, and they are my intercessors, with them is my love, with their enemies is my hatred, in the world of earth and in the world to come eternal.'"

Then the Maulvee says:—

" Know ye for a truth, O man (repeating his name), that the God we worship is One only, Great and Glorious, Most High and Mighty God, who is above all lords, the only true God.

" Know ye also, That Mahumud is the best of the Lord's messengers.

" That Ali and his successors, (before enumerated, but always here repeated), were the best of all leaders.

" That whatever came with Mahumud is true, (meaning the whole work of his mission);—Death is true; the Interrogation by Moonkih and Nykee (the two angels) is true; the Resurrection is true; Destruction is true; the Bridge of Sirraat is true; the Scales are true; Looking into the Book is true; Heaven and Earth are true; Hell is true; the Day of Judgment is true.

" Of these things there is no doubt—all are true; and, further, that God, the great and glorious God, will raise all the dead bodies from their graves."

Then the Maulvee reads the following prayer or benediction, which is called Dooar prayer :—

"May the Lord God, abundant in mercy, keep you with the true speech; may He lead you to the perfect path; may He grant you knowledge of Him, and of His prophets.

"May the mercy of God be fixed upon you for ever. Ameen."

This concluded, the Maulvee quits the grave, and slowly moves forty measured paces in a line with it; then turning round, he comes again to the grave, with the same solemnity in his steps, and standing on the edge, he prays,

"O great and glorious God, we beseech Thee with humility make the earth comfortable to this Thy servant's side, and raise his soul to Thee, and with Thee may he find mercy and forgiveness."

"Ameen, Ameen," is responded by all present.

This ends the funeral service: the earth is closed over by the servants, &c. and, except with the very poor, the grave is never entirely forsaken, day or night, during the forty days of mourning; readers of the Khoraun are paid for this service, and in the families of the nobility the grave is attended for years by those

hired, who are engaged to read from that book perpetually, relieving each other at intervals day and night.

They believe that when the Maulvee quits the grave, the angels enter to interrogate the dead body, and receive the confession of his particular faith; this is the object of the Maulvee's retiring forty paces, to give the angels time to enter on their mission to the dead.

The Mussulmauns all believe that Mhidhie, the standing proof as he is called, will visit the earth at a future period; they are said to possess prophecies, that lead them to expect the twelve hundred and sixtieth year of the Hegirah, as the time for his coming. The Soonies say, this Emaum has yet to be born:—the Sheahs believe the Emaum Mhidhie is the person to reappear. Some believe he is still on earth, dwelling, as they conjecture, in the wilds and forests; and many go so far as to assert, that Mhidhie visits (without being recognised) the Holy House of Mecca annually, on the great day of sacrifice; but I cannot find any grounds they have for this opinion.

They also possess a prophecy, on which much dependance is placed, that "When the four quarters of the globe contains Christian inhabitants, and when the Christians approach the confines of Kaabah, then may men look for that Emaum who is to come." And it is the general belief amongst Mussulmauns, founded on the authority of their most revered and valued writers, that Emaum Mhidhie will appear with Jesus Christ at his second coming; and with whom, they declare and firmly believe, he will act in concert, to purge the world of sin and wickedness. When, they add, "all men shall be of one mind and one faith."

Of the three principal Roots of the Mussulmauns' faith, little need be further said in explanation. I have had various opportunities of learning their undisguised thoughts, and wish only to impart what the people are, who are so little known to the world in general. All persons having had the opportunity of studying the peculiarities of their particular faith, will, I think, give them due credit, that reverence for, and belief in God, forms a promi-

nent trait in their character and faith: "The English translation of the Khoraun by Sale, (imperfect as all works must be, where the two languages are inadequate to speak each others meaning,) will tell without a commentary, that the worship of God was the foundation on which Mahumud built his code of laws; and that the prophets were all acknowledged by him as messengers sent from God to his people, in every age of the world; and, lastly, that Mahumud was the prophet, who came when the people of the earth, vicious and profane, had fallen into the most dissolute habits, worshipping idols instead of God." This passage is the sentiment expressed to me by a worthy man, and a true Mussulmaun; I have traced it out for the sake of explaining what is in the hearts of the Mussulmauns of the present day.

When I have conversed with some of them on the improbability of Mahumud's prophetic mission, I have been silenced by a few words, "How many prophets were sent to the Israelites?"—"Many."—"You cannot enumerate them?

then, is it too much to be probable, that God's mercy should have been graciously extended to the children of Ishmael? they also are Abraham's seed. The Israelites had many prophets, in all of whom we believe; the Ishmaelites have one prophet only, whose mission was to draw men from idolatry to the true God. All men, they add, will be judged according to their fidelity in the faith they have professed. It is not the outward sign which makes a man the true Mussulmaun; neither is it the mere profession of Christianity which will clear the man at the last day. Religion and faith are of the heart."

In their collection of writings, I have had access to a voluminous work, entitled "Hyaatool Kaaloob" (Enlightener of the Heart). My husband has translated for me, occasionally, portions of this valuable work, which bears a striking similarity to our Holy Scriptures, though collected after a different manner; I have acquired, by this means, a more intimate acquaintance with the general character of the Mussulmauns' belief. This book contains all the prophets' lives, at every age of the world. It was

compiled by Mahumud Baakur, first in Arabic, and afterwards translated by him into the Persian language, for the benefit of the public; and is of great antiquity—I cannot now ascertain the exact date.

The Mussulmaun belief on the subject of the resurrection is, "When the fulness of time cometh, of which no man knoweth, then shall the earth be destroyed by fire—and after this will be the resurrection of the dead."

The branches emanating from the roots of the Mussulmaun faith will require further explanation which shall follow in due course. I will in this letter merely add what is meant by the Bridge of Sirraat, the Scales, and Looking into the Book as noted in the burial service.

"The Bridge of Sirraat," they understand, is to be passed over by every person in their passage to eternity, and is represented sharp as the keenest sword.* The righteous will be gifted with power to pass over with the rapidity of lightning, neither harm nor inconvenience will

* May not this be a poetical symbol, similar to the scythe.

attend them on the passage. The wicked, on the contrary, will be without help, and must be many times injured and cut down in the attempt. An idea has crept into the minds of some, that whoever offers up to God, at different periods of his life, such animals as are deemed clean and fitting for sacrifice, the same number and kind, on their day of passing Sirraat, shall be in readiness to assist them on the passage over.

On this supposition is grounded the object of princes and nobles in India offering camels in sacrifice on the day of Buckrah Eade. This event answers our Scripture account of Abraham's offering, but the Mussulmauns say, the son of Abraham so offered was Ishmael, and not Isaac. I have disputed the point with some of their learned men, and brought them to search through their authorities, in some one or two there is a doubt as to which was the son offered, but the general writers and most of the Mussulmauns themselves believe Ishmael was the offering made by Abraham.

"The Scales are true;" the Mussulmauns

believe, that on the day of judgment, the good and the bad deeds of every mortal will be submitted to the scales prepared in Heaven for that purpose.

"Looking into the Book is true;" the Mussulmauns believe that every human being from their birth is attended by two angels, one resting on the right shoulder the other on the left, continually; their business is to register every action of the individual they attend; when a good action is to be recorded, they beseech the Almighty in His mercy to keep the person in the good and perfect way; when evil ways are to be registered, they mourn with intercessions to God, that His mercy may be extended, by granting them repentant hearts, and then, His forgiveness. Thus they explain "Looking into the book is true," that whatever is contained in this book will be looked into on the day of judgment, and by their deeds therein registered shall they be judged.

In the "Hyaatool Kaaloob" is to be found the lives of the Emaums, from which is gleaned the following remarks:—

"The Emaum Mhidhie was an orphan at nine years old. Alrouschid, the King of Bagdad, advised by his wicked minister, resolved on destroying this boy (the last of the Emaums), fearing as he grew into favour with the people, that the power of his sovereignty would decrease.

The King sent certain soldiers to seize Mhidhie, who was at prayers in an inner room when they arrived. The soldiers demanded and were refused admittance, they then forced an entrance and proceeded to the room in which the Emaum was supposed to be at prayers, they discovered him immersed to the waist in a tank of water; the soldiers desired him to get out of the water and surrender himself, he continued repeating his prayer, and appeared to take no notice of the men nor their demand. After some deliberations amongst the soldiers, they thought the water was too shallow to endanger their lives, and one entered the tank intending to take the Emaum prisoner, he sank instantly to rise no more, a second followed who shared the same fate; and the rest, deterred by the

example of their brother soldiers, fled from the place, to report the failure of their plan to the King at Bagdad.

This writer reports that the Emaum Mhidhie was secretly conveyed away, supposed by the interposition of Divine Providence, and was not again seen, to be recognized, on earth; yet it is believed he still lives and will remain for the fulfilment of that prophesy which sayeth:—"When Mecca is filled with Christian people Emaum Mhidhie will appear, to draw men to the true faith; and then also, Jesus Christ will descend from heaven to Mecca, there will be great slaughter amongst men; after which there will be but one faith—and then shall there be perfect peace and happiness over all the world."

The Mussulmauns of the present age discourse much on the subject of that prophesy—particularly during the contest between the Greeks and Turks, of which however they had no very correct information, yet they fancied the time must be fast approaching, by these leading events, to the fuller accomplishment; often, when in conversation with the most religious

men of the country, I have heard them declare it as their firm belief that the time was fast approaching when there should be but one mind amongst all men. "There is but little more to finish;" "The time draws near;" are expressions of the Mussulmauns' belief, when discoursing of the period anticipated, as prophesied in their sacred writings;—so persuaded are they of the nearness of that time. In relating the substance of my last serious conversation with the devout Meer Hadjee Shaah, I shall disclose the real sentiments of most, if not every religious, reflecting, true Mussulmaun of his sect in India.

Meer Hadjee Shaah delighted in religious conversations, it was his happiest time when in the quiet of night, the Meer, his son, translated, as I read, the Holy Bible to him. We have often been thus engaged until one or two, and even to a later hour in the morning; he remembered all he heard, and drew comparisons, in his own mind, between the two authorities of sacred writings—the Khoraun and Bible; the one he had studied through his long life, the other, he was now equally satisfied, contained

the word of God; he received them both, and as the "two witnesses" of God. The last serious conversation I had with him, was a very few days before his death; he was then nearly in as good health as he had been for the last year; his great age had weakened his frame, but he walked about the grounds with his staff, as erect as when I first saw him, and evinced nothing in his general manner that could excite a suspicion that his hours had so nearly run their course.

We had been talking of the time when peace on earth should be universal; "My time, dear baittie (daughter), is drawing to a quick conclusion. You may live to see the events foretold, I shall be in my grave; but remember, I tell you now, though I am dead, yet when Jesus Christ returns to earth, at his coming, I shall rise again from my grave; and I shall be with him, and with Emaum Mhidhie also."

This was the substance of his last serious conversation with me, and within one short week he was removed from those who loved to hear his voice; but he still lives in the memory of

many, and those who knew his worth are reconciled by reflecting on the "joy that awaits the righteous."

"Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."—Also, "In my Father's house are many mansions." These were particularly pleasing passages to him, and often referred to in our scriptural conversations.

LETTER VII.

Namaaz (daily prayer).—The Mussulmaun prayers.—Their different names and times.—Extra prayer-service.—The Mosque.—Ablutions requisite previous to devotion.—Prostrations at prayers.—Mosque described.—The Mussulmauns' Sabbath.—Its partial observance.—The amusements of this life not discontinued on the Sabbath.—Employment of domestics undiminished on this day.—Works of importance then commenced.—Reasons for appropriating Friday to the Sabbath.—The Jews opposed to Mahumud.—The Prophet receives instructions from the angel Gabriel.—Their import and definition.—Remarks of a Commentator on the Khoraun.—Prayer of intercession.—Pious observance of Christmas day by a Native Lady.—Opinions entertained of our Saviour.—Additional motives for prayer.—David's Mother's prayer.—Anecdote of Moses and a Woodcutter.—Remarks upon the piety and devotion of the female Mussulmauns.

THE Mussulmaun Lawgiver commanded Namaaz (daily prayer) five times a day:

1st. "The Soobhoo Namaaz," to commence at the dawn of day.

2nd. "The Zohur," at the second watch of the day, or mid-day.

3rd. "The Ausur," at the third day watch.

4th. "The Muggrib," at sunset; and,

5th. "The Eshaa," at the fourth ghurrie of the night.

These are the commanded hours for prayer. Mahumud himself observed an additional service very strictly, at the third watch of the night, which was called by him, "Tahujjoot," and the most devout men, in all ages of their faith, have imitated this example scrupulously.

"The Soobhoo Namaaz," is deemed a necessary duty, and commences with the earliest dawn of day. The several prayers and prostrations occupy the greatest part of an hour, with those who are devout in their religious exercises; many extend the service by readings from an excellent collection, very similar to our Psalms, called "The Vazefah."

"The Zohur Namaaz," an equally essential duty, commences at mid-day, and occupies about the same time as "The Soobhoo."

"The Ausur Namaaz," commences at the third day watch. The religious men are not tempted to excuse themselves from the due

observance of this hour; but the mere people of the world, or those whose business requires their time, attach this service to the next, and satisfy their conscience with thinking that the prayer-hours combined, answers the same purpose as when separately performed.

"The Muggrib Namaaz." This is rigidly observed at sunset; even those who cannot make it convenient at other hours, will leave their most urgent employment to perform this duty at sunset. Who that has lived any time in India, cannot call to mind the interesting sight of the labouring classes, returning to their home after the business of the day is over? The sun sinking below the Western horizon, the poor man unbinds his waist, and spreads his cummerbund on the side of the road; he performs his ablutions from his brass lota of water, and facing Mecca, bows himself down under the canopy of heaven, to fulfil, what he believes to be, his duty at that hour to his merciful God.

"The Eshaa Namaaz," commences at the fourth ghurrie of the night. The form of prayer, for this Namaaz, is much longer than the rest.

The devout men extend their prayers at this still hour of the night; they tell me that they feel more disposed at this time to pour out their hearts to God in praise and thanksgiving, than at any other period of the day or night; and I have known many of them to be at silent prayer for hours together.

Many persons in their early life may have neglected that due obedience expected in the commanded daily prayers; in after life, they endeavour to make up the deficiency, by imposing on themselves extra services, to fulfil the number omitted. By the same rule, when a member of the family dies, and it is suspected the due performance of Namaaz had been neglected by him, the survivor, who loved him or her in life, is anxious for the soul's rest, and thus proves it by performing additional prayers for the benefit of the soul of that beloved individual.

If a Mussulmaun falls from affluence to penury, twelve devout men of his faith engage to fast and pray, on a day fixed by themselves, to make intercession for their friend:—they believe in the efficacy of good men's prayers; and Meer

Hadjee Shaah has often declared to me, that he has witnessed the benefit of this exercise by the happiest results, in many such cases.

The Khoraun, it is commanded, shall be read. A person perhaps dies before he has been awakened to a love of sacred things; his friends therefore engage readers to attend his grave, and there to read the Khoraun for the benefit of the departed soul.

They have a firm belief in the efficacy of prayer by proxy; and the view they have of departed spirits is still more singular. They believe the soul hovers over the body in the grave for some time, and that the body is so far animated, as to be sensible of what is passing; as when the Maulvee is repeating the service, the angels visit in the grave, or when the Khoraun is read; hence the belief in the efficacy of prayer and reading as substitutes for neglected or omitted duties whilst on earth.

There are in all the mosques men retained to do the requisite service there, that is, to keep it clean, and to prevent any thing that could pollute the sanctuary from entering; to call at

the stated hours for Naamaz, with a loud voice, so that all the neighbourhood may hear and go to prayers; he mounts the minaret as the hour is striking, and pronounces, "Allah wo uckbaar!" "Mahúmudoon Russool Allah!"—God alone is true! Mahumud is God's Prophet!—with a voice, the extent of which can only be imagined by those who have heard it; this summons is repeated many times over.

The mosque is open day and night for all who choose to enter for the purpose of prayer. The Mussulmauns, however, in their prayer-services are not restricted to the mosques; all places are deemed holy where no unclean animal has been to defile the spot, as dogs or swine, nor any idol been set up for worship. The person coming to Namaaz must not have contaminated himself by touching the dead, or any other thing accounted unclean, until he has bathed his whole body and changed his clothes. This resembles the Mosaic law.

Ablutions are regarded as essentially necessary: if any one is ill, and to use water would

be dangerous, or if there be no water to be found where the Mussulmaun is about to pray, there is an allowed substitute, merely to rub the hands, feet, knees, and head with the dry dust of clay, and this is counted to them for ablutions. Thus prepared, the devotee spreads his prayer-carpet (generally of fine matting) in the most convenient place to himself, if not in the mosque;—perhaps under a tree, in the verandah, or in a room, no matter where, taking care, under all circumstances, that the carpet is spread to face the Kaabah (Holy House at Mecca).

At the commencement of his prayers, he stands erect, his hands lifted up, the palms held out towards heaven, where the eyes are also turned whilst expressing adoration and praise to God. This ended, he prostrates himself before the Almighty, his forehead touching the ground; the form of words here used expresses the unworthiness of the creature permitted to approach and worship the Creator; again he stands to repeat the glorious perfections of God; he then kneels in worship and prayer,

after which prostrations are resumed, &c. In the performance of some of the services they prostrate five times, standing up and kneeling an equal number of times; the shortest services have three, and all the prayers and praises are arranged in Arabic,—that most expressive language,—which to translate, they say, is to corrupt the meaning of the prayers. For this reason the Khoraun is not allowed in any other than the original language; and for the benefit of the unlearned in Arabic, it is commented upon, passage by passage, in the Persian language.

The mosques are all erected on one plan; the entrance to the outer court is secured by a gate or door always on the latch, without locks, bars, or bolts; in the paved yard a tank or reservoir for bathing or ablutions, is usually provided. The mosque itself is square, with a dome and two minarets; the side next the court-yard is the entrance, and generally this front is entirely open; the back of the mosque faces Mecca, in which direction the prayer must be offered to be effectual. These houses of prayer are generally kept clean and neat, but

not the slightest ornament allowed within the walls; the floor is matted, and a plain wooden mhembur (pulpit) is provided. Shoes never enter within the precincts of the mosque; "Put off thy shoes" is strictly observed by Mussulmauns in all sacred places—a man praying with shoes on his feet would be accounted mad or a heathen.

The Sabbath of the Mussulmauns is kept on Friday, commencing on the preceding night, after the manner of the Jews, only with the difference of the day.

As a religious rest, the Sabbath is but partially observed with Mussulmauns. The Soonies, I have remarked, pay much more attention to its institutions than the Sheahs; but with either sect, the day is less strictly kept, than might have been expected from people who really seem to make religion their study, and the great business of their lives. Both sects have extra prayers for the day besides the usual Namaaz, which the religious people perform with great punctuality, whether they carry their devotions to the mosque, or offer their prayers

in due form in their own abode. On the Sabbath they make it a point to bathe and change their apparel; the public offices are closed, and the shops partially shut until mid-day; the rulers,—as Kings or Nuwaubs,—distinguish the day, by not receiving their courtiers and the public visitors, as on other days. Charitable donations are likewise more bountifully dispensed from the rich to the poor on Friday.

These observances serve to convince us that they believe in the constituted Sabbath; still there is not that strict respect for the holy day which could satisfy the scrupulous feelings of a Christian; the servants are quite as much employed on Friday as on any other day;—the dhurzie (tailor), dhobhie (washerman), and indeed the whole establishment of servants and slaves, male and female, find their work undiminished on the Sabbath. The ladies amuse themselves with cards or dice, the singing women even are quite as much in request as on other days; and all the amusements of life, are indulged in without once seeming to suspect that they are disobeying the law of God, or

infringing on their actual duties. Indeed, I believe they would keep the day strictly, if they thought doing so, was a necessary duty: but I have often observed, that as Friday is one of their "fortunate days," works of any importance are commenced on this day;—whether it be building a house,—planting a garden or field,—writing a book,—negotiating a marriage, —going a journey,—making a garment, or any other business of this life which they wish should prosper. With them, therefore, the day of rest is made one of the busiest in the calendar; but I must do them the justice to say, that they believe their hearts are more pure after the ablutions and prayers have been performed. And that as nothing, however trifling or important, according to their praiseworthy ideas, should ever be commenced without being first dedicated to God,—from whose mercy they implore aid and blessings on the labour of their hands,—they set apart Friday for commencing whatever business they are anxious should prosper. This was the excuse made by the pious Meer Hadjee Shaah.

Mahumud's biographers notice in many instances the strict observance of the Sabbath, at the period in which he flourished; they also say he selected Friday to be observed as the Mussulmaun Sabbath in distinction from the Jews, who, it would seem were jealous of Mahumud's teaching, and annoyed both him and his followers in every way they could possibly devise. And the Khoraun commentators, on the subject of Mahumud's mission, declare, when speaking of the place to which the Mussulmaun bow in prayer, "That when Mahumud first commenced his task of teaching the ignorant Arabians to forsake their idol worship, and to turn to the only true God, he was often reviled and insulted by the Jews; who even ridiculed the presumption of the Mussulmauns in daring to bow down, in their worship, towards Jerusalem, in the same direction with them. Mahumud was sadly perplexed whether to abstain or continue the practice, as he was unwilling to offend the Jews: in this trial he was visited by the angel Gabriel, who brought the following command to him from God:—

"Turn from Jérusalem; and when thou bowest down to me, face that Holy House of Abraham, the place of sacrifice: that shall be thy Kiblaah, O Mahumud."

Kiblaah is the point to which men bow in worship. Kaabah is the "Holy House" where Abraham's sacrifice was offered. Mecca is the city or tract of country surrounding the house.

Thus they will say: "I am making my pilgrimage to Mecca, to visit the Kaabah, which in my Namaaz, has been my Kiblaah when worshipping my God."

A Commentator on the Khoraun writes, in allusion to the prevailing worldly-minded men of his day, the following expressive definition of the objects most worshipped by them, and concludes with the one only Kiblaah deserving men's attention.

"The Sovereign's Kiblaah is His well-ornamented crown.

"The Sensualist's Kiblaah, The gratification of his appetites.

"The Lover's Kiblaah, The mistress of his heart.

" The Miser's Kiblaah, His hoards of gold and silver.

" The Ambitious Man's Kiblaah, This world's honours and possessions.

" The mere Professor's Kiblaah, The arch of the Holy House. And

" The Righteous Man's Kiblaah, The pure love of God,—which may all men learn and practise."

The Mussulmaun Faith, directs them to believe, not only in the prophets and their writings, but also that they are intercessors at the throne of grace; for this reason Mahumud taught his followers to call on God to hear them for the sake of,—

" 1st. Adam, Suffee Ali, (' the Pure' is the nearest possible translation).

" 2nd. Noah, the Prophet of God.

" 3rd. Abraham, the Friend of God.

" 4th. Moses, who Conversed with God.

" 5th. Jesus, the Soul of God.

" 6th. Mahumud, the Prophet of God."

Those persons who are devout in the exercise of their religious duties day by day, in the concluding part of the morning Namaaz strictly

observe the practice of Mahumud and the Emaums, in the prayers of intercession; and the "Salaam-oon-ali Khoom," (peace or rest be with thee) O Adam Suffie Ali! and to thee, O Noah, the Prophet of God! and to thee, O Abraham! &c. &c. going through the line in the manner and rotation above-described, concluding with the several Emaums, twelve in number (as in their Creed).

It will be seen by this, that they have reverence for all who came from God, to teach mankind His will. They believe also, that the Holy prophets are sensible of the respect paid to them by existing mortals, as also when on earth they knew what was in the hearts of those men they conversed with. I have the honour to be acquainted with a lady of the Mussulmaun Religion, who lives in accordance with the Faith she professes. There was a period in her life, within my recollection, when she had very severe trials of a domestic nature. She trusted in God for relief, and followed in the way she had been instructed, keeping fasts and holy days; testifying her respect for the prophets, by

observing those days for extra prayer and giving alms, which the Khoraun and commentaries represent as worthy to be done, by the devout Mussulmauns.

Amongst the number of days strictly observed by this pious lady during her troubles, was the Nativity of Jesus Christ, for whose sake she fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and gave alms to the necessitous. I was the more delighted when first hearing of this circumstance, because I had judged of the Mussulmaun faith by common report, and fancied they rejected, with the Jews, our Redeemer having come. They, on the contrary, believe, according to their Prophet's words, "that He was born of the Virgin Mary; that He worked miracles; that He ascended after His earthly commission had ceased, to the seventh heaven; that He will again visit the earth (when their Emaum Mhidhie will also appear), to cleanse the world of its corrupt wickedness, when all men shall live in peace, and but one faith shall prevail, in the worship of the true God."

The Mussulmaun work, Hyaatool Kaloob,

(which I have so often referred to,) contains, with the lives of all the prophets, the Life of Jesus Christ, His acts, and the Ungeel (Gospel). The Gospel they have is in many things different from ours; it is not formed into books by the apostles, neither are the miracles united with the Gospel, but are detailed as the acts of Christ Jesus. What they understand by the Ungeel, is, "the Word of God by the mouth of Jesus;"—for instance, the Sermon on the Mount, or, in other words, the precepts of Jesus. I am indebted to The Meer for this information.

The Mussulmauns say, "All power belongs to God.—Who would dare dispute the miracle of Christ's birth? Is there any thing difficult with God? God first formed Adam from the dust; and by His word all things were created. Is there any thing too great for His power? Let no man, then, dispute the birth of Christ by a pure Virgin." They believe that Jesus Christ was the Prophet of God, but they believe not that He is God; and they deem all who thus declare Christ to be God, as unfaithful both to God and to Christ.

I have said the Mussulmauns of each sect have extra prayers, beside the Namaaz, or daily services of prayer. I suppose there are a greater variety of prayers amongst these people than with those of any other religion. Very few, if any, of the devout men, in the early ages of their religion, have omitted to leave behind them some testimony of their regard for posterity in the form of "prayers," dictating the words most likely to lead the heart of the creature to the worship of the Creator; and also directions how to pray for any particular object they may desire to accomplish by the aid of God, in whom they are instructed and believe the fulness of power, as of glory, ever was, is, and will be to all eternity.

If the Mussulmaun suffers by persecution, by sickness, by loss of property, or any other distress of mind or body, he applies himself to the particular prayer of a favourite Emaum, or holy scribe, suited to his exact case. I cannot do better here than copy the translation my husband has made of the leading causes for the use of that prayer called "Daaoods (David's)

Mother's Prayer," in which I have known so many people to be engaged, when under difficulties, at the appointed period, viz. the fifteenth day of the month Rujub. The prayer itself occupies about sixteen closely written pages, and the person intending to make use of it, is expected to bathe and fast, as commanded by Mahumud, who instructed his followers in this prayer, which was then called "The Opening of Difficulties," afterwards, and to the present day "David's Mother's Prayer," by reason of a miraculous occurrence which followed her having fulfilled the task of fasting, preparation, and the prayer alluded to.

"A very poor woman had been engaged in the family of the Emaum Jaffur Saadick, as wet-nurse to his son; she was much respected in the family, who wished to have retained her with them, when the child was weaned; but she would return to her own village, where her son was living, at some distance from the city of Koofah.

"Her son, named Daaood, grew up under her maternal care, and proved the great comfort and

solace of her life, by his dutiful and affectionate bearing towards her. At that period the reigning King of Arabia was a most cruel man, and an idolater; he persecuted all the professors of the 'True Faith' whenever they came within his reach, with the most barbarous brutality.

"One day, at an early hour, Daaood's mother presented herself at the house of the Emaum, in great distress of mind, and related the heavy affliction which had befallen her, in the loss of her dearly loved son, (then a fine youth), who had been decoyed by the wicked emissaries of the King, for the purpose, it was feared, of immolation—as it was known to be his custom, when laying the foundation of a building, to deposit living victims of the Mussulmaun faith beneath it. The poor woman had no hope her eyes would ever again be blessed with the sight of her fondly-loved son, and still more agonizing were her fears, that his protracted sufferings would be of the same terrible description with numbers of the faithful who had fallen into the hands of that wretched heathen King.

"Her friends in the Emaum's family, grieved

over the sad affliction with which their favourite had been visited. The Emaum strove to comfort her, and proposed that she should perform the prayer in which Mahumud had instructed his followers for. 'The Opening of Difficulties.' 'Alas!' replied the woman, 'poor ignorant that I am, how shall I repeat that prayer; I cannot read: knowest thou not, my Emaum, that I am not acquainted with letters?' 'But I will teach you the prayer,' answered the Emaum; 'you shall repeat it after me, and by diligence you will acquire it perfectly by that day, on which our Prophet commanded his followers to perform the fast and offer this prayer, that God might be pleased to remove their calamities.'

"The poor woman obeyed all the injunctions and advice of the Emaum Jauffur Saadick punctually; acquired, by her diligence, the words of the prayer; strictly observed the preparation by fast; and, on the fifteenth 'day of Rujub,' the prayer was duly performed, with sincere devotion and perfect faith in God's power, and His infinite mercy.

"In the mean time, it appears, the King having been much troubled in a dream, he was warned to release his prisoner from captivity without delay, at the peril of destruction to himself and all he possessed. The warning dream presented him with a view of the gulph to which he was condemned, if he delayed the release of Daaood from his confinement. The person of the youth was so clearly represented to the King in his dream, that there could be no possible mistake in the particular captive to be freed, out of the many he held in bondage. The King awakening from his troubled sleep, demanded of his attendants where the young man was confined; and learning from the chief officer of his court that Daaood was sent to a distant place, to be the offering buried under the foundation of a house, erecting by his command: the swiftest camels were ordered immediately, to convey messengers with two bags of gold, and the King's mandate, peremptorily ordering the release of the youth, if happily he yet existed; and if the building was proceeding with, the superintendant was cautioned to pull it down

with the utmost care and dispatch, so that nothing should be omitted which could be done to preserve that life now so dear to the hopes of the King.

"The messengers reached the place on the third day after Daaood had been immured in the foundation of the building. Small, indeed, were the hopes that the King's desires would be gratified. The builder, however, more humane than his employer, had so raised the work round the person of Daaood, as to leave him unhurt by its pressure, and having left a small aperture for air, his life was preserved ;—the masonry being removed promptly, and with caution, the youth was discovered not only alive, but even uninjured by the confinement. The courier mounted the boy on the camel, with the present of gold contained in two bags, and conveyed Daaood, without loss of time, to his mother's abode.

"All the particulars having undergone due investigation, it was clearly proved that it was on that very day when the poor woman was occupied in her fast and prayer, that her son

Daaood was released from the foundation of the King's house and restored to his home. From this time forward the prayer of 'Opening Difficulties' was denominated 'Or of Daaood's Mother.'

Turning over my collection of curiosities for the story of Daaood's Mother, which The Meer translated for me many years since, I met with an ancient anecdote which I received from the same dear revered friend I must often quote as my author when I am detailing the particulars of things which I have heard and not seen,—Meer Hadjee Shaah,—who tells me he has found the following anecdote in the "Commentary on The History of Moses."—It is translated by my husband.

"When Huzerut* Moosa (Moses), 'to whose spirit be peace!' was on earth, there lived near him a poor yet remarkably religious man, who had for many years supported himself and his wife by the daily occupation of cutting wood for his richer neighbours, four small copper coins (equivalent to our halfpence)

* Reverend, or Superior.

proved the reward of his toil, which at best afforded the poor couple but a scanty meal after his day's exertions.

"The prophet Moosa passed the Woodcutter one morning, who accosted him with 'O Moosa! Prophet of the Most High; behold I labour each day for my coarse and scanty meal; may it please thee, O Huzerut! to make a petition for me to our gracious God, that He may in His mercy grant me at once the whole supply for my remaining years, so that I shall enjoy one day of earthly happiness, and then, with my wife, be transferred to the place of eternal rest." Moosa promised and made the required petition; his prayer was answered from Mount Tor, thus:—

"'This man's life is long, O Moses! nevertheless, if he be willing to surrender life when his supply is exhausted, tell him thy prayer is heard, the petition accepted, and the whole amount shall be found beneath his jhaawn namaaz (prayer carpet) after his early prayers.'

"The Woodcutter was satisfied when Moosa told him the result of his petition, and when

the first duties of the morning were concluded, he failed not in looking for the promised remittance, where, to his surprise, he found a heap of silver coins. Calling his wife, the Woodcutter told her what he had required of the Lord through his Holy Prophet Moosa; pointing to the result, they both agreed it was very good to enjoy a short life of happiness on earth and depart in peace; although they could not help again and again recurring to the number of years on earth they had thus sacrificed. 'We will make as many hearts rejoice as this the Lord's gift will admit,' they both agreed, 'and thus we shall secure in our future state the blessed abode promised to those who fulfil the commands of God in this, since to-morrow our term of life must close.'

"The day was spent in providing and preparing provisions for the meal. The whole sum was expended on the best sorts of food, and the poor made acquainted with the rich treat the Woodcutter and his wife were cooking for their benefit. The food was cooked for the indigent, and allotments made to

each hungry applicant, reserving for themselves one good substantial meal, to be eaten only when the poor were all served and satisfied. It happened at the very moment they were seated to enjoy this their last meal, as they believed, a voice was heard, 'O friend! I have heard of your feast,—I am late, yet may it be, that you have a little to spare, for I am hungry to my very heart. The blessing of God be on him who relieves my present sufferings from hunger!' The Woodcutter and his wife agreed that it would be much better for them to go to heaven with half-a-bellyful, than leave one fellow-creature on earth famishing for a meal; they, therefore, determined on sharing their own portion with him who had none, and he went away from them rejoicing. 'Now,' said the happy pair, 'we shall eat our half-share with unmixed delight, and with thankful hearts. By to-morrow eve we shall be transferred to paradise.'

"They had scarcely raised the savoury food to their opening mouths, when a voice of melancholy bewailing arrested their attention, and

stayed the hands already charged with food;—a poor wretched creature, who had not tasted food for two whole days, moaned his piteous tale in accents that drew tears from the Woodcutter and his wife—their eyes met and the sympathy was mutual; they were more willing to depart for heaven without the promised benefit of one earthly enjoyment, than suffer the hungry creature to die from want of that meal they had before them. The dish was promptly tendered to the bewailing subject, and the Woodcutter and his wife consoled each other by thinking that, as their time of departure was now so near at hand, the temporary enjoyment of a meal was not worth one moment's consideration. 'To-morrow we die, then of what consequence to us whether we depart with full or empty stomachs!' And now their thoughts were set on the place of eternal rest. They slept, and arose to their morning orisons with hearts resting humbly on their God, in the fullest expectation that this was their last day on earth: the prayer was concluded, and the Woodcutter in the act of rolling

up his carpet, on which he had bowed with gratitude, reverence, and love to his Creator, when he perceived a fresh heap of silver on the floor;—he could scarcely believe it was not a dream. 'How wonderful art thou, O God!' cried the poor Woodcutter; 'this is thy bounteous gift that I may indeed enjoy one day before I quit this earth.' And when Moosa came to him, he (Moosa) was satisfied with the goodness and power of God; but he retired again to the Mount to inquire of God the cause of the Woodcutter's respite. The reply given to Moosa was, 'That man has faithfully applied the wealth given in answer to his petition. He is worthy to live out his numbered years on earth, who, receiving my bounty, thought not of his own enjoyments whilst his fellow men had wants he could supply.' And to the end of the Woodcutter's long life, God's bounty lessened not in substance; neither did the pious man relax in his charitable duties of sharing with the indigent all that he had, and with the same disregard to his own enjoyments."

I have but little to add, as regards the manner of worship amongst my Mussulmaun acquaintance; but here I cannot omit remarking, that the women are devout in their prayers and strict in their observance of ordinances. That they are not more generally educated is much to be regretted; this, however, is their misfortune not their fault. The Mussulmaun faith does not exclude the females from a participation in the Eternal world,—as has so often been asserted by people who could not have known them,—and the good Mussulmaun proves it by his instruction of the females under his control in the doctrines of Mahumud, and who, he believes to be as much dependant on him for guidance on the road to heaven, as for personal protection from want or worldly dangers.

The pure life of Fatima, Mahumud's only daughter, is greatly esteemed as an example of female excellence, whom they strive to imitate as much as possible, as well in religious as in moral or domestic duties. They are zealous to fulfil all the ordinances of their particular faith, —and I have had the best possible opportunity

of studying their character,—devotion to God being the foundation on which every principal action of their lives seems to rest.

In my delineation of character, whether male or female, I must not be supposed to mean the whole mass of the Mussulmaun population. There are good and bad of every class or profession of people; it has been my good fortune to be an inmate with the pious of that faith, and from their practice I have been aided in acquiring a knowledge of what constitutes a true disciple of Mahumud.

LETTER VIII.

The Fast of Rumzaun.—Motives for its strict observance.—Its commencement and duration.—Sentiments of Meer Hadjee Shaah on the duty of fasting.—Adherence of the females to the observing this fast.—How first broken.—Devout persons extend the term to forty days.—Children permitted to try their zeal.—Calamitous effects of the experiment.—Exemptions from this duty.—Joyful termination of the fast.—Celebration of Eade on the last day.—The Nuzza.—Nutchwomen and Domenie.—Surprise of the Natives at European dancing.—Remarks on their Music.—Anecdotes of Fatima.—The Chuckee.

" The poor man fasts, because he wanteth meat;
The sick man fasts, because he cannot eat.
The miser fasts, with greedy mind, to spare;
The glutton fasts, to eat a greater share.
The hypocrite, he fasts to seem more holy;
The righteous man, to punish sinful folly."

THE secret motive of the heart, man cannot fathom in his neighbour's deeds. There are some actions so praiseworthy in themselves, that the charitably disposed will pass over the

probable actuating motive, when looking only to the fair example. I have, however, reason to think that the Mussulmauns generally, in fulfilling the commanded fast of Rumzaun, have an unexceptionable motive.* They are taught by their Lawgiver, that the due performance of this rigid fast is an acceptable service to God the Creator, from man the creature: they believe this, and therefore they fast.

Amongst the well-informed it is persevered in as a duty delightful to be permitted to perform; the ignorant take some merit to themselves in having faithfully observed the command; yet all the fasting population are actuated more or less by the same motive,—the desire to please God by fulfilling His commands, delivered to them by their acknowledged Prophet.

The severity of a Mussulmaun's fast can alone be understood by those who have made the trial, as I frequently have, of the strict rules of abstinence which they observe; and with the additional privations to be endured at the period of the hottest months and the longest days in the

same climate, as will sometimes be the case with all their moveable fasts.

The Mussulmaun fast commences when the first streak of light borders the Eastern horizon, and continues until the stars are clearly discerned in the heavens. During this period not the slightest particle of food, not one single drop of water, or any other liquid, passes the lips; the hookha even, is disallowed during the continuance of the fast, which of itself forms not only a luxury of great value, but an excellent antidote to hunger.

Amongst the really religious Mussulmauns the day is passed in occasional prayer, besides the usual Namaaz, reading the Khoraun, or the Lives of the Prophets. I have witnessed some, in their happy employment of these fatiguing days, who evinced even greater animation in their conversation than at other times; towards the decline of a day, when the thermometer has stood at eighty-nine in the shade of a closed house, they have looked a little anxious for the stars appearing, but,—to their credit be it told,—without the slightest symptom of impa-

tience or fretfulness at the tardy approach of evening.

My revered friend, Meer Hadjee Shaah, always told me that the great secret of a fast, to be beneficial, was to employ time well, which benefited both soul and body; employment suited to the object of the fast being the best possible alleviation to the fatigue of fasting. He adds, if the temper be soured either by the abstinence or the petty ills of life, the good effects of the fast are gone with the ruffled spirit, and that the person thus disturbed had much better break his fast, since it ceases to be of any value in the sight of Him, to whom the service is dedicated; the institution of the fast having for its object to render men more humble, more obedient to their God; all dissensions must be forgotten; all vicious pursuits abandoned, to render the service of a fast an acceptable offering to God.

In the zeenahnah, the females fast with zealous rigidness; and those who have not the happiness to possess a knowledge of books, or a husband or father disposed to read to them,

will still find the benefit of employment in their gold embroidery of bags and trimmings, or other ornamental needlework; some will listen to the Khaaunie (tales), related by their attendants; others will overlook, and even assist in the preparations going forward for opening the fast. Ladies of the first quality do not think it a degradation to assist in the cooking of choice dishes. It is one of the highest favours a lady can confer on her friends, when she sends a tray of delicate viands cooked by her own hands. So that with the prayers, usual and occasional, the daily nap of two hours, indulged in throughout the year, occupation is made to fill up the day between dawn and evening; and they bear the fatigue with praiseworthy fortitude. Those who are acquainted with letters, or can afford to maintain hired readers, pass this month of trials in the happiest manner.

The fast is first broken by a cooling draught called tundhie; the same draught is usually resorted to in attacks of fever. The tundhie is composed of the seeds of lettuce, cucumber, and melon, with coriander, all well pounded

and diluted with cold water, and then strained through muslin, to which is added rose-water, sugar, syrup of pomegranate, and kurah, (a pleasant flavoured distilled water from the blossom of a species of aloe). This cooling draught is drank by basins' full, amongst the Rozedhaars (fasters), and it is generally prepared in the zeenahnah apartments for the whole establishment, male and female. Some of the aged and more delicate people break their fast with the juice of spinach only, others choose a cup of boiling water to sip from. My aged friend, Meer Hadjee Shaah, has acquired a taste for tea, by partaking of it so often with me; and with this he has broken his fast for several years, as he says, with the most comforting sensations to himself. I have seen some people take a small quantity of salt in the first instance, preparatory to a draught of any kind of liquid. Without some such prelude to a meal, after the day's fast, the most serious consequences are to be apprehended.

After indulging freely in the simple liquids, and deriving great benefit and comfort from a

hookha, the appetite for food is generally stayed for sometime: many persons prefer a rest of two hours before they can conveniently touch the food prepared for them, and even then, seldom eat in the same proportion as they do at other meals. Many suffice themselves with the one meal, and indulge in that very sparingly. The servants and labouring classes, however, find a second meal urgently necessary, which they are careful to take before the dawning day advances. In most families, cold rice-milk is eaten at that early hour. Meer Hadjee Shaah, I have before noticed, found tea to be the best antidote to extreme thirst, and many are the times I have had the honour to present him with this beverage at the third watch of the night, which he could enjoy without fear of the first streaks of light on the horizon arriving, before he had benefited by this luxury.

The good things provided for dinner after the fast, are (according to the means of the party) of the best, and in all varieties; and from the abundance prepared, a looker-on would pro-

nounce a feast at hand; and so it is, if to feed the hungry be a feast to the liberal-hearted bestower, which with these people I have found to be a part and parcel of their nature. They are instructed from their infancy to know all men as brothers who are in any strait for food; and they are taught by the same code, that for every gift of charity they dispense with a free good will, they shall have the blessing and favour of their Creator abundantly in return. On the present occasion, they cook choice viands to be distributed to the poor, their fellow-labourers in the harvest; and in proportion to the number fed, so are their expectations of blessings from the great Giver of all good, in whose service it is performed. In my postscript you will find several anecdotes of the daughter of Mahumud on the subject of charity.

When any one is prevented fulfilling the fast of Rumzaun in his own person he is instructed to consider himself bound to provide food for opening the fast of a certain number of poor men who are Rozedhaars. The general food of the peasantry and lower orders of the people—

bread and dhall*—is deemed sufficient, if unable to afford anything better.

When any one dies without having duly observed the fast, pious relatives engage some devout person to perform a month's fast, which they believe will be accepted for the neglectful person. Many devout Mussulmauns extend the fast from thirty to full forty days, by the example of Mahumud and his family; and it is no unusual thing to meet with others, who in addition to this month, fast every Thursday through the year; some very rigid persons even fast the month preceding and the following month, as well as the month of Rumzaun.

Some very young people (children we should call them in happy England), are permitted to try their fasting powers, perhaps for a day or two during the month of Rumzaun. The first fast of the noviciate, is an event of no small moment to the mother, and gives rise to a little festival in the zeenahnah; the females of the

* Dhall is a sort of pea, sometimes cooked in a savoury way with garlic, salt, ghee, pepper and herbs. It is about the consistence of thick pea-soup—but without meat.

family use every sort of encouragement to induce the young zealot to persevere in the trial when once commenced, and many are the preparations for the opening fast with due eclat in their circle—sending trays of the young person's good things to intimate friends, in remembrance of the interesting event; and generally with a parade of servants and music, when the child (I must have it so) belongs to the nobility, or persons of consequence, who at the same time distribute money and food to the poor.

These first fasts of the young must be severe trials, particularly in the hot season. I have heard, it is no uncommon thing for the young sufferers to sink under the fatigue, rather than break the fast they have had courage to commence. The consolation to the parents in such a case would be, that their child was the willing sacrifice, and had died "in the road of God," as all deaths occurring under performances of a known duty are termed.

Within my recollection a distressing calamity of this nature occurred at Lucknow, in a

very respectable family. I did not know the party personally, but it was the topic in all the houses I visited at that period. I made a memorandum of the circumstance at the time, from which the following is copied:

"Two children, a son and daughter of respectable parents, the eldest thirteen and the youngest eleven years of age, were permitted to prove their faith by the fast, on one of the days of Rumzaun; the parents, anxious to honour their fidelity, expended a considerable sum of money in the preparations for celebrating the event amongst their circle of friends. Every delicacy was provided for opening their fast, and all sorts of dainties prepared to suit the Epicurean palates of the Asiatics, who when receiving the trays at night would know that this was the testimony of the children's perseverance in that duty they all hold sacred.

"The children bore the trial well throughout the morning, and even until the third watch of the day had passed, their firmness would have reflected credit on people twice their age, making their first fast. After the third watch,

the day was oppressively hot, and the children evinced symptoms of weariness and fatigue; they were advised to try and compose themselves to sleep; this lulled them for a short time, but their thirst was more acute when they awoke than before. The mother and her friends endeavoured to divert their attention by amusing stories, praising their perseverance, &c. The poor weak lady was anxious that they should persevere; as the day was now so far gone, she did not like her children to lose the benefit of their fast, nor the credit due to them for their forbearance. The children endeavoured to support with patience the agony that bowed them down—they fainted, and then the mother was almost frantic, blaming herself for having encouraged them to prolong their fast against their strength. Cold water was thrown over them; attempts were made to force water into their mouths; but, alas! their tender throats were so swollen, that not a drop passed beyond their mouths. They died within a few minutes of each other; and the poor wretched parents were left childless through their own

weakness and mistaken zeal. The costly viands destined for the testimony of these children's faith, it may be supposed, were served out to the hungry mendicants as the first offerings dedicated to the now happy spirits of immortality."

This is a sad picture of the distressing event, but I have not clothed it in the exaggerated garb some versions bore at the time the circumstance happened.

There are some few who are exempt from the actual necessity of fasting during Rumzaun; the sick, the aged, women giving nourishment to infants, and those in expectation of adding to the members of the family, and very young children, these are all commanded not to fast. There is a latitude granted to travellers also; but many a weary pilgrim whose heart is bent heavenward, will be found taking his rank amongst the Rozedhaars of the time, without deeming he has any merit in refraining from the privileges his code has conferred upon him; such men will fast whilst their strength permits them to pursue their way.

Towards the last week of Rumzaun the haggard countenances, and less cheerful manners of the fasting multitude seem to increase, but they seldom relax unless their health is likely to be much endangered by its continuance.

The conclusion of the month Rumzaun, is celebrated as an Eade (festival), and, if not more splendid than any other in the Mussulmaun calendar, it is one of the greatest heart-rejoicing days. It is a sort of thanksgiving day amongst the devout people, who have been permitted to accomplish the task; and with the vulgar and ignorant, it is hailed with delight as the season of merriment and good living—a sort of reward for their month's severe abstinence.

The namaaz of the morning, and the prayer for Eade, commence with the dawn; after which the early meal of Eade is looked forward to with some anxiety. In every house the same dainties are provided with great exactness (for they adhere to custom as to a law), plain boiled rice, with dhie (sour curd) and sugar, forms the first morning repast of this Eade; dried dates are eaten with it, (in remembrance of the Prophet's

family, whose greatest luxury was supposed to be the dates of Arabia). A preparation of flour (similar to our vermicelli) eaten with cold milk and sugar, is amongst the good things of this day, and trifling as it may appear, the indulgence is so great to the native population, that they would consider themselves unfortunate Rozedhaars, if they were not gratified, on this occasion, with these simple emblems of long-used custom. The very same articles are in request in Mussulmaun society, by this custom, from the King to the meanest of his subjects.

The ladies' assemblies, on this Eade, are marked by all the amusements and indulgences they can possibly invent or enjoy, in their secluded state. Some receiving, others paying visits in covered conveyances; all doing honour to the day by wearing their best jewellery and splendid dresses. The zeenahnah rings with the festive songs and loud music, the cheerful meeting of friends, the distribution of presents to dependants, and remembrances to the poor; all is life and joy, cheerful bustle and amusement, on this happy day of Eade, when the

good lady of the mansion sits in state to receive nuzzas from inferiors, and granting proofs of her favour to others.

Nuzza is an offering of money from inferiors to those who rank in society above the person presenting; there is so much of etiquette observed in Native manners, that a first visit to a superior is never made without presenting a nuzza. When we arrived in India, an old servant of my husband's family, named Muckabeg, was sent to meet us at Patna to escort us to Lucknow; on entering our budgerow he presented fourteen rupees to me which were laid on a folded handkerchief. I did not then understand what was intended, and looked to The Meer for explanation; he told me to accept Muckabeg's "Nuzza." I hesitated, remarking that it seemed a great deal more than a man in his situation could afford to give away. My husband silenced my scruples by observing, "You will learn in good time that these offerings are made to do you honour, together with the certain anticipation of greater benefits in return; Muckabeg tenders this nuzza to you,

perhaps it is all the money he possesses, but he feels assured it will be more than doubly repaid to him in the value of a khillaut (dress of honour), he expects from your hands to-day. He would have behaved himself disrespectfully in appearing before you without a nuzza, and had you declined accepting it, he would have thought that you were either displeased with him, or did not approve of his coming." This little incident will perhaps explain the general nature of all the nuzzas better than any other description I could offer.

Kings and Nuwaubs keep the festival in due form, seated on the throne or musnud, to receive the congratulations and nuzzas of courtiers and dependants, and presenting khillauts to ministers, officers of state, and favourites. The gentlemen manage to pass the day in receiving and paying visits, all in their several grades having some inferiors to honour them in the presentation of offerings, and on whom they can confer favours and benefits; feasting, music, and dancing-women, filling up the measure of their enjoyments without even thinking of wine, or

any substitute stronger than such pure liquids as graced the feasts of the first inhabitants of the world.

The Nautch-women in the apartments of the gentlemen, and the Domenie in the zeenahnahs are in great request on this day of festivity, in every house where the pleasures and the follies of this world are not banished by hearts devoted solely to the service of God. "The Nautch" has been so often described that it would here be superfluous to add to the description, feeling as I do an utter dislike both to the amusement and the performers. The nautchunies are entirely excluded from the female apartments of the better sort of people; no respectable Mussulmaun would allow these imprudent women to perform before their wives and daughters.

But I must speak of the Domenie, who are the singers and dancers admitted within the pale of zeenahnah life; these, on the contrary, are women of good character, and their songs are of the most chaste description, chiefly in the Hindoostaunie tongue. They are instructed in Native music and play on the instruments in

common use with some taste,—as the saattarah (guitar), with three wire strings; the surringhee (rude-shaped violin); the dhome or dholle (drum), in many varieties, beaten with the fingers, never with sticks. The harmony produced is melancholy and not unpleasing, but at best all who form the several classes of professors in Native societies are indifferent musicians.

Amateur performers are very rare amongst the Mussulmauns; indeed, it is considered indecorous in either sex to practise music, singing, or dancing; and such is the prejudice on their minds against this happy resource amongst genteel people of other climates, that they never can reconcile themselves to the propriety of "The Sahib Logne,"—a term in general use for the English people visiting India,—figuring away in a quadrille or country dance. The nobles and gentlemen are frequently invited to witness a "station-ball;" they look with surprise at the dancers, and I have often been asked, why I did not persuade my countrywomen that they were doing wrong. "Why do the people fatigue themselves, who can so

well afford to hire dancers for their amusement?" Such is the difference between people of opposite views in their modes of pleasing themselves: a Native gentleman would consider himself disgraced or insulted by the simple inquiry, "Can you dance, sing, or play?"

The female slaves are sometimes taught to sing for their ladies' amusement, and amongst the many Hindoostaunie airs there are some that would please even the most scientific ear; although, perhaps, they are as old as the country in which they were invented, since here there are neither composers of modern music, nor competitors for fame to bring the amusement to a science. Prejudice will be a continual barrier to improvement in music with the Natives of India; the most homely of their national airs are preferred at the present day to the finest composition of modern Europe.

My promised postscript, is a translation from the Persian, extracted from "The Hyaatool Kaaloob." The author is detailing the manner of living, habitual to Mahumud and his family,

and gives the following anecdotes "hudeeth" (to be relied on), which occurred at the season of Rumzaun ; the writer says :—

"It is well known that they (Mahumud's family) were poor in worldly wealth; that they set no other value on temporal riches (which occasionally passed through their hands) but as loans from the great Giver of all good, to be by them distributed amongst the poor, and this was done faithfully; they kept not in their hands the gifts due to the necessitous. The members of Mahumud's family invariably lived on the most simple diet, even when they could have commanded luxuries.

"At one season of Rumzaun,—it was in the lifetime of Mahumud,—Fatima, her husband Ali, and their two sons, Hasan and Hosein, had fasted two days and nights, not having, at that period, the means of procuring the smallest quantity of food to break their fast with. Habitually and from principle, they disguised from the world or their friends all such temporal trials, as it seemed good in the wisdom of Divine Providence to place in their chequered path; preferring under any circumstances of need, to fix

their sole trust in the mercy and goodness of God for relief, rather than by seeking aid from their fellow-creatures lessening their dependance on Him.

" On the evening above mentioned, Mahumud went to the cottage of Fatima, and said, ' Daughter, I am come to open my fast with thee.'—' In the name of the most merciful God, be it so,' was the reply of Fatima ; yet secretly she sorrowed, that the poverty of her house must now be exposed to her beloved father.

" Fatima spread the dustha-khawn (a large square of calico), on the floor of the room near her father, placed empty plates before him, then retired to her station for prayers ; spreading her mat in the direction of Kaabah, she prostrated herself to the earth before God in the humblest attitude, imploring His merciful aid, in this her moment of trial. Fatima's fervent prayer was scarcely finished, when a savoury smell of food attracted her attention ; raising her head from the earth, her anxious eye was greeted with the view of a large bowl or basin filled with sulleed (the Arabian food of that period). Fatima again bowed down her head, and poured out in humble

strains that gratitude to God with which her heart overflowed. Then rising from her devotions, she took up the savoury food and hurried with it to her father's presence, and summoned her husband and the children to partake of this joyous meal, without even hinting her thoughts that it was the gift of Heaven.

" Ali had been sometime seated at the meal, when he, knowing they had no means of procuring it, looked steadily on Fatima, and inquired where she had secreted this delicious food; at the same time recurring to the two days' fast they had endured. ' Rebuke her not, my son,' said Mahumud, ' Fatima is the favoured of Heaven, as was Myriam (Mary), the mother of Esaee (Jesus), who living in her uncle Zechareah's (Zachariah's) house, was provided by God with the choicest of fruits. Zechareah was poor, and oft he hungered for a meal; but when he entered Myriam's apartment, a fresh supply of rare fruits was wont to greet his eye. Zechareah asked, Whence had ye these precious gifts? Myriam answered, An angel from God places the fruit before me; eat, my uncle, and be satisfied.'"

The writer thus leaves the story of the miraculous food to Fatima's prayer, and goes on as follows:—

"At another season of the fast, this family of charity endured a severe trial, which was miraculously and graciously rewarded. Fatima had a female slave, who shared with her equally the comforts and the toils of life.

"The food allotted to every member, of Ali's family, was two small barley cakes for each day; none had more or less throughout the family. The labour of domestic affairs was shared by Fatima with her female slave, and each took their day for grinding the barley at the chuckee, with which the cakes were made.

"On the — day of Rumzaun, the corn was ground as usual, the cakes made, and the moment for opening the fast anxiously anticipated, by this abstemious family. The evening arrived, and when the family had fulfilled their prayer-duty, the party assembled round the homely dustha-khawn with thankful hearts, and countenances beaming with perfect content. All had their allotted portions, but none had yet

tasted of their cakes, when the voice of distress caught their ears. 'Give me, oh, give me, for the love of God! something to relieve my hunger and save my famishing family from perishing.' Fatima caught up her barley cakes, and ran out to the supplicant, followed by her husband, the two children, and the slave. The cakes were given to the distressed creature, and as they comprised their whole stock, no further supply awaited their returning steps, nor even a substitute within the bare walls of their cottage; a few grains of salt had been left from cooking the barley cakes, and each took a little of the small quantity, to give a relish to the water they now partook of freely; and then retired to sleep away the remembrance of hunger.

"The next day found them all in health, and with hearts at peace; the day was passed in useful occupation, and when evening drew nigh, the same humble fare was ready for the fasting family, whose appetites were doubly keen by the lengthened abstinence. Again they meet to partake in gratitude the great

gift of Divine goodness, wholesome sustenance; when, lo! the sound of sorrowing distress, petitioning in the holy name adored by these pious souls,—'For the Love of God!'—arrested their attention. An appeal so urgently made carried with it a command to their devout hearts, and the meal so long delayed to their own necessities was again surrendered to the beggar's prayers.

"This family of charity had returned to their empty hut, and were seated in pious conversation to beguile their sufferings; not a murmuring word or sigh escaped their sanctified mouths. As the evening advanced thus occupied, a pleasing joy seemed to fill the heart of Fatima, who secretly had sorrowed for her good dear children's privations; presently a bright and powerful light filled the room, an angel stood before them; his appearance gave them no alarm;—they beheld his presence with humility. 'Thy good deeds,' said the angel (Gabriel), 'are acceptable to God, the All Merciful! by whose command I come to satisfy the demands of mortal nature; this

fruit (dates) is the gift of Him you serve; eat and be at peace.' The meal was ample which the angel brought to this virtuous family, and having placed it before them, he vanished from their sight."

The Chuckee, before mentioned, is two flat circular stones (resembling grindstones in England), the upper stone has a pegor handle fixed in it, near the edge, with which it is forced round, by the person grinding, who is seated on the floor; the corn is thrown in through a circular hole on the upper stone, and the flour works out at the edges between the two stones. This is the only method of grinding corn for the immense population throughout Oude, and most other parts of Hindoostaun even to the present day. The late King of Oude, Ghauzie ood deen Hyder, was at one time much pressed by some English friends of his, to introduce water-mills, for the purpose of grinding corn; he often spoke of the proposed plan to The Meer, and declared his sole motive for declining the improvement was the consideration he had for the poor women, who by this employment made an excellent living in every town and village, and

who must, by the introduction of mills, be distressed for the means of support. "My poor women," he would often say, "shall never have cause to reproach me, for depriving them of the use and benefit of their chuckee."

I have before said it is not my intention to offer opinions on the character of the Mussulmaun people, my business being merely to relate such things as I have heard and seen amongst them. The several translations and anecdotes I take the opportunity of placing in these letters, are from authorities the Mussulmauns style, hudeeth (authentic),—that are not, cannot, be doubted, as they have been handed down either by Mahumud or by the Emaums, whose words are equally to be relied on. When any passages in their sacred writings are commented on by different authors, they give their authority for the opinion offered, as Emaum Such-a-one, explains it thus. You understand, therefore, that the Mussulmauns believe these miracles to have occurred to the members of their Prophet's family as firmly as we believe in the truth of our Holy Scripture.

LETTER IX.

The Hadje (Pilgrimage to Mecca).—Commanded to be performed by Mahumud.—Eagerness of both sexes to visit the Prophet's tomb.—Qualifications requisite for the undertaking.—Different routes from India to Mecca.—Duties of the pilgrims at the Holy House.—Mecca and its environs.—Place of Abraham.—The Bedouins.—Anecdote of a devotee and two pilgrims.—A Bedouin Arab, and the travellers to Mecca.—The Kaabah (Holy House).—Superstitious regard to a chain suspended there.—Account of the gold water-spout.—Tax levied on pilgrims visiting the tomb of Mahumud by the Sheruff of Mecca.—Sacred visit to the tombs of Ali, Hasan, and Hosein.—The importance attached to this duty.—Travellers annoyed by the Arabs.—An instance recorded.—The Nudghiff Usheruff.—Anecdotes of Syaad Harshim.

"THE Pilgrimage to Mecca" is commanded by Mahumud to his followers at least once during their lifetime, provided the obstacles are not insurmountable. Indulgences are made for the sick, or individual poverty. All who

have the means at command, whatever may be their distance from the place, are expected to perform the Hadje themselves if possible; or, if prevented by any circumstances they cannot control, they are required to pay the expenses of other persons willing to be their proxies.

Whatever information I have acquired on the subject of this pilgrimage has been gleaned from frequent conversations with Meer Hadjee Shaah, who as I have before remarked, performed the Hadje from Hindoostaun to Mecca, at three different periods of his eventful life.

If the fatigues, privations, and difficulties of the pilgrimage to Mecca be considered, the distance from Hindoostaun must indeed render the Hadje a formidable undertaking; yet, the piously disposed of both sexes yearn for the opportunity of fulfilling the injunctions of their Lawgiver, and at the same time, gratifying their laudable feelings of sympathy and curiosity—their sympathy, as regards the religious veneration for the place and its purposes; their curiosity, to witness with their own eyes, those places rendered sacred by the words of the

Khoraun in one instance, and also for the deposits contained in the several tombs of prophets, whom they have been taught to reverence and respect as the servants of God.

Every year may be witnessed in India the Mussulmauns of both sexes forming themselves into Kauflaahs (parties of pilgrims) to pursue their march on this joyous expedition, believing, as they do, that they are fulfilling a sacred duty. The number of women is comparatively few, and those chiefly from the middling and lower classes of the people, whose expenses are generally paid by the rich females. The great obstacle to the higher classes performing the pilgrimage themselves is, that the person must at times be necessarily exposed to the view of the males. The lower orders are less scrupulous in this respect, who, whilst on the pilgrimage, wear a hooded cloak of white calico, by which the person is tolerably well secreted, so that the aged and the youthful have but one appearance; the better sort of people, however, cannot reconcile themselves to go abroad, unless they could be permitted to have

their covered conveyances, which in this case is impossible.

The qualifications necessary for all to possess, ere they can be deemed fit subjects for the Hadje, are, as I learn, the following:

"They must be true Mussulmauns in their faith; that is, believe in one only true God, and that Mahumud is His Prophet.

"They must strictly obey the duties commanded by Mahumud, that is, prayer five times daily, the fast of Rumzaun, &c.

"They must be free from the world; that is, all their debts must be paid, and their family so well provided for, according to their station, that no one dependant on them may be in want of the necessaries of life during the absence of the pilgrim from his home and country.

"They must abstain from all fermented or intoxicating liquors, and also from all things forbidden to be eaten by the law, (which is strictly on the Mosaic principle).

"They must freely forgive their enemies; and if they have given any one cause of offence,

they must humble themselves, and seek to be forgiven.

" They must repent of every evil they have committed, either in thought, word, or deed, against God or their neighbour."

Thus prepared, the pious Mussulmaun sets out on his supposed duty, with faith in its efficacy, and reliance on the goodness of Divine Providence to prosper him in the arduous undertaking.

Many Kauflaahs from the Upper Provinces of India, travel overland to Bombay; others make Calcutta their place of embarkation, in the Arab ships, which visit those ports annually with returning pilgrims from Arabia, cargoes of coffee, Arabian fruits, and drugs. Some few enterprising people make the whole pilgrimage by land; this is, however, attended with so many and severe difficulties, that but few of the present day have courage to attempt it. In those cases their road would be from Delhie to Cashmire, through Buckaria, making a wide circuit to get into Persia. This is the most tedious route, but possesses the advantages of more inhabited places on the line of march, and there-

fore provisions are the more readily procured. There is one route from the Lahore Province, —the English territory here is bounded by the river Suttledge, which the traveller crosses into the Sikh country,—through Afghastaan and Persia. I have not heard of the Kauflaahs making this their road of late; there seems to be always a disposition to fear the Sikhs,* who are become a powerful nation under Runjeet Singh; but I am not aware what ground the pilgrims have for their distrust, except that they can scarcely expect the same courtesy from these people as from the Mussulmauns, who would naturally aid and assist the pilgrims, and respect the persons thus labouring to accomplish the command of their Prophet.

Whatever may be the chosen route, the pilgrims must make up their minds to many trials necessarily incident to the undertaking; and to the habits of the Mussulmauns of India, I cannot suppose any fatigue or trial greater than the voyage by sea, in an Arab vessel.

* "The Origin of the Sikhs," by H. Colebrooke, Esq. gives a faithful picture of those warlike people.

It is well for those persons whose hearts have undergone that thorough change, which by the law fits them for the Hadje; with such men, earthly calamities, privations, or any other mere mortal annoyances, are met with pious fortitude, having consolations within which strengthens the outward man: in all their trials they will say, "It is in the road of God, by Him cometh our reward."

The duty of the pilgrims, on their arrival at the Holy Place, is to worship God, and visit the tombs of the Prophets. There are forms and regulations to be observed in the manner of worship; certain circuits to be made round the Kaabah; saluting with the lips the sacred stone therein deposited; and calling to remembrance the past wonders of God, with reverence and piety of heart. I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shaah speak of the comfort a humble-minded pilgrim enjoys at the time he is making his visit to the Holy House; he says, "There the heart of the faithful servant of God is enlightened and comforted; but the wicked finds no rest near Kaabah."

The pilgrims visit the tombs of every prophet

of their faith within their reach; as the mausoleum of Hasan and Hosein, the Nudghiff Usheruff of Ali, and, if it be possible, Jerusalem also. At Dimishk (Damascus) they pay respect to the burying-place of Yieyah (St. John), over whose earthly remains is erected, they say, the Jumna Musjud (mosque), to which the faithful resort on Fridays (their Sabbath) to prayer.

Within the confines of the Holy House, life is held so sacred that not the meanest living thing is allowed to be destroyed; and if even by accident the smallest insect is killed, the person who has caused the death is obliged to offer in atonement, at the appointed place for sacrificing to God, sheep or goats according to his means.

According to the description of Meer Hadjee Shaah the city of Mecca is situated in the midst of a partially barren country; but at the spot called Taaif,—only one day's journey from Mecca,—the soil is particularly fertile, producing all kinds of fruit and vegetables in great abundance, and the air remarkably pure and healthy. The word Taaif implies in the Arabic

"the circuits completed." It is recorded "that the angel Gabriel brought this productive soil, by God's command, and placed it at a convenient distance from Mecca, in order that the pilgrims and sojourners at the Holy House might be benefited by the produce of the earth, without having them sufficiently near to call off their attention from the solemn duty of worshipping their God, which they are expressly called upon to perform at Mecca.

My informant tells me that there is a stone at Mecca known by the appellation of "Ibraahim Mukhaun," (Place of Abraham): on this is seen the mark of a human foot, and believed by pilgrims, on good authority, to be the very stone on which Abraham rested his foot when making occasional visits to his son Ishmael: at the performance of this duty he never dismounted from his camel, in compliance with his sacred promise made to Sarah the mother of Isaac.

The pilgrimage to Mecca is most securely performed by those persons who travel in a humble way; riches are sure to attract the

cupidity of the Bedouins. A poor pilgrim they respect, and with him they will share their last meal or coin. The Bedouin Arab delights in hospitably entertaining men of his own faith, provided they are really distressed; but the consequence of deception would be a severe visitation on the delinquent. The two following stories I have received from Meer Hadjee Shaah, descriptive of some of the incidents that occur to pilgrims, and therefore may be acceptable here.

"A good Mussulmaun of Hindoostaun resolved on undertaking the Hadje, being under the strong impression of a warning dream that his earthly career would speedily terminate. He travelled on foot, with one companion only, who was a faithfully-attached friend; they had no worldly wealth, and journeyed on their way as mendicants, trusting for each day's food to the bountiful care of Divine Providence: nor was their trust in vain, since the hearts of all who saw these pious travellers were moved by the power of God to yield them present relief.

"On a certain day these pilgrims had jour-

neyed from the dawn until eve without a meal, or meeting any one to assist them, when thy were at last encountered by a religious devotee of another nation, with whom they conversed for some time. Their new acquaintance having found they were indeed poor, not even possessed of a single coin to purchase corn or food of any kind, expressed his hearty sympathy, and desired to be of service to the pilgrims; he therefore disclosed to them that he was in possession of a secret for the transmutation of metals,* and offered some of his prepared powder to the elder Hadjee, by which he would have persuaded him want should never again intrude; adding, 'You will with this be independent of all future care about subsistence on your pilgrimage.'

"The pious Hadjee, however, was of a dif-

* The Asiatics generally, have faith in certain properties of chemical productions to alter the nature of the common to the precious metals. I have often witnessed the anxious exertions of Natives in India, who try all sorts of experiments in alchemy, expecting to succeed; but I have never known any other issue from the many laborious efforts of individuals than waste of time and property in these absurd schemes.

ferent mind from the devotee, and politely rejected the offer of the powder by which he was to acquire riches, declaring, that the possession of such an article would rob him of the best treasure he enjoyed, namely, the most perfect reliance on Him, by whom the birds of the air are fed from day to day without labour or care, and who had hitherto fed him both in the city and in the desert; and that in this trust he had comforts and consolations which the whole world could not grant him: 'My God, in whom I trust will never desert me whilst I rely on Him alone for succour and support.'"

My excellent friend says, such pilgrims as the one described may pass through the haunts of the Bedouins without fear or sorrow, and they are always respected. The next anecdote I am about to relate will develope more particularly the Arab's natural disposition, and how necessary it is for men really to be that they would seem, when placed by circumstances within their reach. Some of the parties were known to my venerable relative.

"Six Mussulmauns from India were travelling on foot in Arabia; they assumed the title of pilgrim mendicants. On a certain day, they drew nigh to the tent of a Bedouin Arab, who went out to meet them, and entering into conversation, soon discovered by their talk that they were poor pilgrims from India, who depended on casual bounties from men of their faith for their daily meal. The Bedouin, though a robber, had respect for the commands of his religion; and with that respect he boasted a due share of hospitable feeling towards all who were of his own faith; he accordingly told them they were welcome to his home, and the best meal he could provide for them, which offers they very gladly accepted, and followed him to the tent.

"The Arab desired his wife to take water to his guests and wash their feet after the fatigue of their day's march, and told her in secret to divert their attention whilst he went out in search of plunder, that the hospitality of an Arab might be shown to the strangers. Then mounting his fleet-camel, he was quickly out of

sight. Many a weary circuit the Arab made, his ill stars prevailed; not a Kauflaah nor a traveller could he meet, whence a supply might be extracted, to be the means of providing for his guests; his home was pennyless, and with the Bedouins, none give credit. His bad success dispirited him, and he returned to the back of his tent, to consult what was best to be done in this emergency. The only thing he possessed in the world fit for food was the animal on which he rode, from day to day, to levy contributions upon the passing traveller.

"His only immediate resource was to kill his favourite camel. His honour was at stake; the sacrifice would be great; he was attached to the beast; the loss would be irreparable, he thought:—yet every weighty argument on one side to preserve the camel's life, was as quickly overturned in the reflection of his Arabian honour;—his visitors must be fed, and this was the only way he could contrive the meal. With trembling hands and half-averted eyes, the camel's blood was shed; with one plunge his favourite ceased to breathe. For

some minutes, the Arab could not look on his poor faithful servant; but pride drove pity from her haunt, and the animal was quickly skinned and dressed in savoury dishes, with his wife's assistance. At length, the food prepared, the Arab and his wife placed the most choice portions before their guests, and whilst they dined attended them with respectful assiduity; selecting for each the most delicate pieces, to induce the travellers to eat, and evince the cordial welcome tendered by the host.

"The travellers having dined; the Arab and his wife took their turn at the feast with appetites most keen,—forgetful even, for the time, whence the savoury dishes were procured; and if an intruding thought of his favourite camel shot across the mind of the Arab, it was quickly chased in the reflection that his prided honour was secured by the sacrifice, and that reflection was to him a sufficient compensation.

"The pilgrims, refreshed by food, were not inclined to depart, and as they were urged to stay by their friendly host, they slept comfortably

in the Arab's tent, on coarse mats, the only bed known to the wandering Bedouins. The morning found them preparing to pursue their march; but the Arab pressed their continuance another day, to share with him in the abundance his camel afforded for the whole of the party. The travellers were not unwilling to delay their departure, for they had journeyed many days without much ease, and with very little food; their host's conversation also was amusing, and this second day of hospitality by the Arab was an addition to the comfort and convenience of the weary pilgrims.

"The following morning, as was fixed, the travellers rose to take leave of their benevolent host and his attentive wife; each as he embraced the Arab, had some grateful word to add, for the good they had received at his hands. The last of the pilgrims having embraced the Arab was walking from the tent, when the dog belonging to the host, seized the man by his garment and held him fast. 'What is this?' inquired the Arab, 'surely you must have deceived me; my dog is wise as he is

trusty,—he never yet lied to his master. This labaadhar of yours he has taken a fancy to it seems; but you shall have my coat of better looking stuff for your old chintz garment. We will exchange labaadhars, my friend,' said the Arab, throwing his own towards the hesitating traveller. His fellow-pilgrims, hearing altercation, advanced, and with surprise listened to the parley going on between the host and guest.—'I have a veneration for my chintz, old as it is,' said the pilgrim; 'it has been my companion for many years, brother; indeed I cannot part with it,' The dog held fast the garment, and the Arab, finding persuasion was but loss of words, cast a frown of deep meaning on the travellers, and addressed them:—'Ye came to me beggars, hungry and fatigued; I believed ye were poor, and I sheltered ye these two days, and fed ye with my best; nay, more, I even killed my useful camel, that your hunger might be appeased. Had I known there was money with any of ye, my poor beast's life might yet have been spared; but it is too late to repent the sacrifice I made to serve you.'

Then, looking steadfastly at the chintz-robed traveller, he added, in a tone of sharp authority, 'Come, change garments!—here, no one disputes my commands!'

"The trembling pilgrim reluctantly obeyed. The Arab took up the garment and proceeded with it to where the fire was kindled. 'Now we shall see what my trusty dog discovered in your tattered chintz,' said the Arab, as he threw it on the fire. All the pilgrims hovered round the flames to watch what would result from the consuming garment, with intense anxiety. The Arab drew from the embers one hundred gold mohurs, to the surprise and wonder of all the travellers, save him who owned the chintz garment; he had kept his treasures so secretly, that even in their greatest distress, he allowed his brother pilgrims to suffer, with himself, want and privations which, owing to his lust for gold, he had no heart to relieve.

"The Arab selected from the prize he had obtained, by the exchange of garments, ten gold mohurs, and presented them to the owner with a sharp rebuke for his duplicity, alluding to

the meanness he had been guilty of in seeking and accepting a meal from a Bedouin, whilst he possessed so much wealth about his person; then adding,—'There is nothing hidden from God; I killed my sole treasure to give food to the poor hungry travellers; my deed of charity is rewarded; deceit in you is punished by the loss of that wealth you deserved not to possess. —Depart, and be thankful that your life is spared; there are some of my tribe who would not have permitted you to go so easily: you have enough spared to you for your journey; in future, avoid base deceptions.'"

Of the Kaabah (Holy House) many wonderful things are recorded in the several commentaries on the Khoraun, and other ancient authorities, which it would fill my letter to detail. I will, however, make mention of the mystic chain as a sample of the many superstitious habits of that age.

It is said, "A chain was suspended from the roof of Kaabah, whither the people assembled

to settle (by the touch) disputed rights in any case of doubt between contending parties."

Many curious things are related as having been decided by this mystic chain, which it should seem, by their description, could only be reached by the just person in the cause to be decided, since, however long the arm of the faulty person, he could never reach the chain; and however short the person's arm who was in the right, he always touched the chain without difficulty. I will here relate one of the anecdotes on this subject.

"Two pilgrims travelled together in Arabia; on the way one robbed the other of his gold coins, and secreted them carefully in the hollow of his cane or staff. His companion missing his cash, accused him of the theft, and when disputes had risen high between them, they agreed to visit the mystic chain to settle their difference. Arriving at Kaabah, their intentions being disclosed to the keepers of the place, the thief claimed the privilege, being the accused, of first reaching to touch the chain; he then gave the staff in which he had deposited the

money into his fellow-pilgrim's hands, saying, 'Keep this, whilst I go to prove my innocence.' He next advanced and made the usual prayer, adding to which, 'Lord, whatever I have done amiss I strive to remedy; I repent, and I restore;' then raising his arm, he touched the chain without difficulty. The spectators were much surprised, because all believed he was actually the thief. The man who lost his gold, freely forgave his fellow-traveller, and expressed sorrow that he had accused him wrongfully; yet he wished to prove that he was not guilty of falsehood —having really lost his gold,—and declared he also would approach the chain to clear himself from such a suspicion; 'Here,' said he to the criminal, 'take back your staff;' and he advanced within the Kaabah, making the required prayer, and adding, 'Now my Creator will grant me mercy and favour, for He knoweth my gold was stolen, and I have not spoken falsely in that, yet I know not who is the thief.' He raised his hand and grasped the chain, at which the people were much amazed."

It is presumed, by writers of a later period,

that this circumstance threw the mystic properties of the chain out of favour; for it was soon after removed secretly, these writers add, and its disappearance made the subject of much conjecture; no one could ever ascertain by whom it was taken, but the general belief is, that it was conveyed away by supernatural agency. Another marvellous story is recorded of the Kaabah, as follows:

"A poor pilgrim, nearly famishing with hunger, while encircling the Holy House, on looking up towards the building observed the water-spout of gold hanging over his head. He prayed that his wants might be relieved, adding, 'To Thee, O God, nothing is difficult. At thy command, that spout of gold may descend to my relief;' holding the skirt of his garment to receive it, in answer to his faithful address. The spout had been firmly fixed for ages, yet it fell as the pilgrim finished his prayer. He lost no time in walking away with his valuable gift, and offered it to a merchant for sale, who immediately recognizing the gold spout of Kaabah, accused the pilgrim of sacri-

lege, and without delay, handed him over to the Sheruff of Mecca, to answer for his crime. He declared his innocence to the Sheruff, and told him how he became possessed the treasure. The Sheruff had some difficulty in believing his confession, yet perceiving he had not the appearance of a common thief, he told him, if what he had declared was true, the goodness of God would again be extended towards him on the trial he proposed to institute. The spout was restored to its original position on the Kaabah, and made secure. This done, the pilgrim was required to repeat his faithful address to God, in the presence of the assembled multitude; when, to their astonishment, it again descended at the instant his prayer was finished. Taking up the spout without hesitation, he was walking away with it very quietly, when the people flocked round him, believing him to be some sainted person, and earnestly requested him to bestow on them small portions of his raiment as relics of his holy person. The Sheruff then clothed him in rich garments, and in lieu of the

gold spout—which none could now dispute his right to,—the same weight of gold in the current coin of Arabia was given to him, thus raising him from beggary to affluence."

I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shaah speak of this gold spout which adorns the Kaabah, being held in great veneration by the pilgrims who make the Hadje to that place.

All Mussulmauns performing the pilgrimage pay a kind of tax to the Sheruff of Mecca. The present possessors of power in Mecca, are of the Soonie sect. The admission money, in consequence, falls heavy on the Sheahs, from whom they exact heavy sums, out of jealousy and prejudice. This renders it difficult for the poor Sheah pilgrim to gain admittance, and it is even suspected that in many cases they are induced to falsify themselves, when it is demanded of them what sect they belong to, rather than be denied entrance after their severe trial to reach the confines of Mecca. The tax levied on the Soonies is said to be trifling in proportion to that of the Sheahs.

Amongst the different places visited by each

Hadjee,—after the circuit is made,—a zeearut to the tomb of Ali at Nudghiff Usheruff, and the far-famed Kraabaallah of Hasan and Hosein are esteemed indispensable engagements, if it be possible; there is not, however, any command to this effect in the Mussulmaun law, but the Sheahs, zealous for their leaders, are willing to think they do honour to their memory, by visiting those tombs which contain the mortal remains of their respected Emaums.

Travelling through this part of Arabia, Meer Hadjee Shaah says, is attended with much inconvenience and fatigue; but he failed not at each pilgrimage he made, to pay a visit to the mausoleums of his forefathers. He tells me that Kraabaallah was for a long time almost an interdicted visit, through the power of the Soonies, who were so jealous of the respect paid to the Emaums, that the Turks (who are Soonies) raised the price of admission within the gates to one hundred gold pieces. At that time very few people could gratify their yearnings beyond the outside view of the mausoleum; and even now that the entrance-money is much reduced

the sums so collected yield a handsome revenue to the Turks.

I will here introduce an anecdote which proves the value certain individuals set on the zeearut (sacred visit) to Kraabaallah, which I have received from my revered pilgrim-friend and relative.

"Amongst the applicants for admission at the gates of Kraabaallah, was an aged woman clothed in ragged garments. The gatekeeper, judging from her appearance, that she was destitute of money, scoffed at her presumption; she, however, produced the price of admission with much confidence of manner, and demanded entrance without further delay. The keepers now suspected the old woman to be a thief, and commenced interrogating her how she became possessed of so large a sum. The poor old woman answered them, 'I have laboured hard for thirty years at my spinning-wheel, and have debarred myself during those years of all superfluities, contenting myself with a bare subsistence; I have done this that the dearest wish of my heart might once in my life-

time be gratified, to visit and weep over the tomb of my Emaums. Here, take the fruits of my labour, and let me have my reward; every moment delayed is agony to me.'"

In journeying through Arabia, pilgrims are much annoyed with the intrusion they so frequently meet with from the idle Arabs, who force their way into every stranger's place of sojourn without ceremony, to strain the nerves of charity from "brethren of the faith."

There is a maxim well known amongst Mussulmauns,—the words of Mahumud,—"With the faithful, all are brothers;" and this is the pass-word with those idle men who pretend to have too much pride to beg, and are yet too indolent to labour for their support.

A Mussulmaun,—however great his rank,—is seated with his friends and attendants; an Arab, who lives by this method, stalks into the tent or apartment, salutes the master with, "Salaam-oon-ali Koom!" (health or peace be with you!) and unbidden takes his seat on the nearest vacant spot to the head person of the assembly. After the first surprise excited by the

stranger's intrusion, he looks at the master and says, "I claim the privilege of a brother;" by which it is to be understood, the Arab requires money from the richer man of his faith. A small sum is tendered, he receives it without indicating any sense of obligation, rises from his seat, and moves off with no other than the familiar salute which marked his entrance, "Salaam-oon-ali Koom!"

A rich Eunuch, of Lucknow, accompanied Meer Hadjee Shaah on one of his pilgrimages, with a large Kauflaah. Upon one occasion, when the whole party were seated in friendly conclave, some of these idle Arabs entered in the way described; the Eunuch was unacquainted with the language, or the manners of Arabia, and expressed his dislike to their freedom in warm language, and evident anger in his countenance; many had claimed the tribute of brotherhood, when the Eunuch, who was accustomed in his own country to receive respect and deference from inferiors, lost all patience with the uncourtly intrusion of the Arabs, and evinced his wrath to the proud

Arab then present, who understood by his violent manners, if not by his language, that he was offended with him. The good sense and kindly manner of Meer Hadjee Shaah, restored tranquillity in the assembly; he gave money to the man, and apologised for his friend's ignorance of the customs of Arabia: thus preventing the enraged Arab from fulfilling his threat of forcing the Eunuch to appear before the Sheruff of Mecca.

Nudghiff Usheruff, the burying place of Ali, is the resort of many pious men of the Mussulmaun persuasion, as well as the shrine to be visited by the "the faithful" of the Sheah sect. Amongst the many singular stories, I have heard of the devout men of that religion, I select one from the number relating to a man, whose abode was,—through choice,—near the shrine of their beloved Emaum Ali. I shall give it in exactly the style I have received it, through my husband's translation, from an old work in the Persian language.

"In the reign of Nadir Shaah, a devout man of the faith took up his abode in the

vicinity of Nudghiff Usheruff in Arabia. He was a Syaad, named Harshim; a man of great learning, whose heart was set on seeking with love the most merciful God, whom he served faithfully. Syaad Harshim, conscious that the riches and honours of this world are inadequate to procure eternal happiness, and feeling convinced that the more humble a man's mode of living is, the greater are the prospects of escaping temptations in this life of probation, resolved on labouring for his daily bread, and relinquished with his paternal home, the abundance and riches which his ancient house had long boasted.

"Syaad Harshim selected Nudghiff Usheruff for his sojourn, and the business of a woodman for a calling. The piety of his life and the goodness of his heart, drew upon him the respect of the inhabitants of the city. It was his practice to spend every day in the jungle (wilderness) cutting fire-wood, of which he gave a light burthen to his ass; and returning towards evening to the populated city, he found ready customers for the load, which his day's

labour produced. His honesty and love of truth were proverbial: he asked the price for his wood which he intended to take; if more was offered, it was rejected,—if less, he would not accept it.

"One evening, a man of superior address to his usual customers, but poorly clad, met him at the entrance of the street, and bargained for the load of wood. Syaad Harshim was penetrating, and could not help expressing his surprise at the circumstance of one, evidently moving in a higher sphere, being there to purchase wood. 'I see' said the Syaad to the purchaser, 'that your station is superior to your circumstances! — How is this?'—'My story,' replied the stranger, 'is not, I fear, uncommon in this age of the world. I will relate it briefly:—I was once a rich man, and my mind was set on making the pilgrimage. Aware that valuables and money would be an incumbrance to me on my journey, I applied to the Kauzy of this city to take charge of all my worldly riches during my absence, to which he readily consented, and

having packed my jewels, money, and valuables in a strong chest with a good lock, I gave it into his charge and departed.

" 'My pilgrimage accomplished, and tired of a wandering life, I returned home after a few years' absence, waited on the Kauzy, and applied for the treasure I had deposited in his care; he denied all knowledge of me or my valuables, pretended not to understand me, called me an impostor, and eventually drove me from his house with violence. I again tried the Kauzy by expostulation, and sent my friends to him, but all without benefit; for here I am as you see me, Syaad Harshim, reduced to penury by the Kauzy's injustice. The world esteems him a person of great character, and condemns me as the unjust one. Well! I can say no more; I know that God is merciful, I put my trust in Him!' 'Ameen,' responded the Syaad, 'do you so, and it will yet be well with you.'

"The stranger lingered with the sympathising Woodman, and after some time had elapsed he asked him if he would interest him-

self with the Kauzy to effect a restitution of his rights, adding, 'All are willing to give you, O Syaad, great credit for superior virtues.' Harshim replied he had no merit to call for his fellow-mortals' good opinion, but as he felt interested in the affair he would certainly visit the unjust man, and requested the stranger to meet him at the Kauzy's door on the following morning.

"Arrived at the Kauzy's residence, Harshim was received with evident pleasure, for though but a woodman, he yet was known to be a person of superior rank, and a man universally respected for his great piety. After the common salutations, the Syaad stated the object of his visit, assuring the Kauzy he was actuated purely by good feelings towards him in the part he had undertaken;—being desirous only of preserving his soul from the evil that attended the unjust men of this world, who die without repentance and restitution to those whom they have injured. Then calling the stranger forward, he said with firmness of voice and manner, 'Behold this man! he left

money and jewels in your charge whilst he went on his duty to the pilgrimage; he comes now to demand his property, give back his chest of treasures without delay, honestly and justly, as you hope for mercy in a future state!'

"The Kauzy answered, 'I have it not, Syaad Harshim, you may believe me; this fellow wickedly raises the falsehood to injure me, and it is as much to his own dishonour as to my discredit. I beg, therefore, you will neither give credit to his base assertions, nor think so meanly of me; my station as Kauzy of this district should, methinks, screen me from such imputations.'—'True,' said Harshim, 'the station you occupy in the world, and the place you hold as Kauzy, prevent suspicion from attaching to you; hence this poor man has not yet found redress to the justice of his claims. I would have you believe me sincerely your friend, in desiring to bring your heart to repentance, and thus only can your soul's safety be secured. I know you to have this man's property, and your own heart even now

convicts you of the injustice you practise. Nothing is hidden from God;—reflect on the punishment prepared for the unrepenting hypocrite. Listen, whilst I relate to you my own convictions, or rather experience, of that terrible punishment which is prepared for the impenitent hardened sinner beyond the grave.

" ' I have been a woodman for several years, and by my daily labour have earned my coarse food. Some years since, I was sick and unable to pursue my usual occupation; my supply was thus cut off. Requiring temporary relief, I applied to a rich banker of this city for a trifling loan; my request was promptly complied with, and I engaged to repay the sum by two pice each day upon again resuming my employment. By the mercy of God I recovered; and on the evening of each day, as I sold the wood my day's labour produced in the market, I paid the Banker two pice. On the very day, however, that the last two were to have been paid, the Banker died. Thus I remained his debtor still. Often had I thought of the circumstance that I was his

debtor, and with real regret; yet the sum was small, and with this I became reconciled.

"'Not long after his decease I was visited with a dream, important to all the world to know, and I therefore desire to make it public. Judgment was opened to my view; the beauty of heaven was displayed on one side, and the torments of hell on the other. My dream presented many people waiting their award, whom I had known in life, and amongst the number my creditor the Banker; he was standing on the brink of that fiery yawning gulf which is prepared for the wicked and unjust. His attendant angels produced the documents of their faithful keeping,—good and evil actions of every mortal are thus registered,—one exhibited a small blank book in which not one good deed had been recorded, and that presented by the other, containing the evils of his ways on earth, appeared to me an immense volume filled throughout.

"'Take him to his merited torments! was pronounced in an awful tone of command.—Have mercy! have pity! cried the Banker,

in a supplicating voice.—Produce one claim for pity, was heard.—The Banker in agony looked wildly round, as if in search of something he might urge in extenuation, when casting his eyes on me he exclaimed, There! oh, there is one! who when in trouble I relieved, and he is still my debtor!'

" 'In my dream this appeared too slender a benefit to draw forth the slightest remission of the punishments awarded to his deserts. Away with him! was heard.—Oh! cried the Banker's soul, draw near to me, thou good, virtuous, and humble Woodman, that the reflected light of thy virtues may give one instant's ease to my present torture. Let me but touch the righteous Harshim, and I will depart to my just punishment with submission!

" 'I was permitted to gratify the unhappy spirit, wondering at the same time what benefit he could derive from touching me. Advancing near the tortured soul he stretched forth his hand and touched me on the knee; it was like a firebrand; I drew back hastily and found my knee was scorched. Return to men with warn-

ings, said the wretched spirit. Tell them of my unhappy state; tell them what are the tortures of the wicked; that touch you have received on your knee, is of the same nature my whole body suffers in eternal flames.—The pain I suffered in my knee disordered my sleep; I awoke in agony, and here it is to this day,' said the Woodman, untying a bandage from his knee. 'Examine the place, and be warned O Kauzy, by the terrible certainty I have brought from that Banker whom you knew, and who is now suffering for his injustice on earth. I have been lame from that night of my dream,' continued Syaad Harshim, 'but I shall rejoice in the pain, if the example influence one hardened sinner to repent, whilst repentance may avail.'

"During the recital of the dream, Syaad Harshim watched the countenance of the Kauzy, who tried in vain to hide the guilty changes of his face. The Syaad at last fixed his keen eyes on him, 'Now friend' said he, 'it would be great folly to add guilt to guilt by farther subterfuge. I know the day, the

hour, you ingeniously substituted a false key to this man's chest; I could tell you what you wickedly took out; the place where it is secreted, even, is not hidden from my knowledge; go, bring it from your wife's apartment; a little labour will remove it from the corner near the bedstead.'

" The Kauzy was now subdued by the commanding truths of the Syaad, and his heart being softened by the fearful relation of the Banker's torment, he sank to the earth with shame and remorse,—' I acknowledge my sin, thou holy man of truth;—forgive me!' he cried, 'forgive me, oh my God! I am indeed repentant, and by this holy man's means I am brought to a sense of my guilt!' He then went to the women's apartment, brought out the chest and delivered it to the owner, entreating Syaad Harshim to forgive him.

" The Syaad replied, ' I have nothing to forgive, nor power to remit; my advice you have freely, and may it serve you! Seek pardon from God who loves to be sought, and whose mercy never faileth. He is not the God of

revenge, where repentance is sincere; but He is the God of mercy to all who seek Him faithfully. His mercy is already extended to you, for He has given you time to repent: —but for His mercy, you had been taken to your punishment, whilst you had no thoughts of repentance in your guilty heart. Farewell! let me know by your future life, that Syaad Harshim's lost labour in the jungle of this day, has produced something to the better harvest—awakening one sinner to a sense of his danger.'"

Meer Hadjee Shaah has related to me many singular anecdotes of this Syaad Harshim, which are generally spoken of, and believed to be true by the sojourners at Nudghiff Usheruff. His memory is much respected by the Mussulmauns, and the acts of his life are registered with the veneration paid to saints, amongst people of more enlightened nations. They confidently assert, that whenever Syaad Harshim presented himself at the entrance to Nudghiff Usheruff, the gates, which are always kept locked, flew open to receive him.

In proof that he disregarded worldly possessions, the following is related of him in the ancient works both of Arabia and Persia:—

" The great conqueror Nadir Shaah, on one occasion visited the shrine of Ali, with a vast retinue of his chiefs, courtiers, and followers. The King heard, whilst at Nudghiff Usheruff, of the sainted life led by the Woodman, Syaad Harshim, in that neighbourhood, and he felt disposed to tender a present of money and valuables, to induce the Syaad's prayer for his future prosperity. Accordingly, the King commanded trays to be filled from his Indian spoils, which were sent with a message, humbly couched, entreating the good Syaad would accept his offering of respect, and make prayers to God for him.

" The trays were conveyed by servants of the King, who arrived at the Syaad's hut, at the moment he was satisfying the demands of nature with a meal of coarse barley bread and pure water. ' What is all this?' inquired the Syaad, on seeing the valuables before him. ' An humble offering from the great Nadir

Shaah,' replied the messenger, 'who entreats you will honour him by the acceptance of his presents, and offer your pious prayer for God's mercy in his behalf.' 'My prayers,' said the Syaad, 'I can promise shall be made duly and truly, but not my acceptance of his gifts. Take back these hateful, useless things! Tell Nadir Shaah, Syaad Harshim will not even touch them.' The messenger tried persuasions without avail; he was constrained to return to his royal master, with his loaded trays.

"No sooner were the King's servants out of sight, than the wife of Syaad Harshim vented her disappointments in no measured strain of anger towards her husband. 'Here am I,' said the old lady, 'a very slave in consequence of our poverty, a very beggar in appearance, and my scanty meal of coarse bread is scarce sufficient to keep me in bodily strength; surely you ought to have remembered me, when the King's offering was before you—even if you liked not to accept it for yourself.'—'I might indeed,' he replied, have done as you

say, wife, had I known your sentiments sooner; but I believed you were as contented as myself with homely fare and honest labour; but be comforted, you shall have a share of the next offering made by the King to Syaad Harshim, provided your present inclination remains unchanged by time.' This promise quieted the wife's angry humour, and peace was again restored between them.

"'Wife,' said the Syaad, 'this al-kaulock (Arab's coat of calico) of mine requires a little of thy labour: as I have now no other garment to change with, I trust you may please to wash it whilst I take my sleep;—one caution you must observe,—I have occasion for the water, in which this dress is to be washed; preserve it carefully for me, my good wife;' and he laid him down on his mat to sleep. The wife, obedient to her husband's wishes, washed his dress, and took care to preserve the dirty water; when he awoke, she brought him the clean garment, and received his warm commendations for her diligence. She then produced the pan of dirty water, in which she had cleansed the garment,

saying, 'There, Syaad Harshim, I have done as you desired.'—'Very good,' replied her husband, 'now you must farther oblige me by drinking it—you know there is nothing in this water but the sweat of my body produced by my daily labour.' The wife, disgusted at the strange request of her husband, looked with amazement, and fancied he must have lost his senses. 'What is this you require of me? would you poison your wife, O Syaad Harsham, with the filth from your skin, the accumulation of many days' labour in the jungles? art thou mad, to ask thy wife a request so unheard-of?'

"'Listen to me, wife,' said the Syaad, in gentle terms; 'you profess to love, honour, and respect me, as your faithful, lawful husband; pray can the dirt from my body be more offensive to your palate than the scum of Nadir Shaah, whom you only know by name? You would have accepted the filthy offerings of a cruel man, who plundered and sacrificed his victims to obtain the treasures he possesses;—you would not have scrupled to obtain your future sustenance by the coins of Nadir Shaah,

gained as they were by the spilling of human blood? Is this your love for Syaad Harshim?' The wife threw herself at her husband's feet, when his speech was finished: 'Pardon me, my dear husband! pardon my ignorance and self-love; I see myself disgraced by harbouring one wish for more than is gained by honest industry. No longer have I any desire for the gold of Nadir Shaah. Contented as yourself, my dear, good husband! I will continue to labour for the honest bread that sustains, nor ever again desire my condition to be changed.'"

The Woodman, Syaad Harshim, lived to a great age; many a tear hath fallen on his grave from the good pilgrims visiting the shrine of Ali, near which he was buried; and his resting place is reverenced to this day by the passing traveller of his own faith.

LETTER X.

The Zuckhaut (God's portion).—Syaads restricted the benefit of this charity.—The Sutkah.—The Emaum's Zaumunee (protection).—The Tenths, or Syaads' Due.—Mussulmauns attribute thanks to God only, for all benefits conferred.—Extracts from the "Hyaatool Kaaloob."—Mahumud's advice.—His precepts tend to inculcate and encourage charity.—Remarks on the benevolence of Mussulmauns.

On the subject of Zuckhaut, commanded by Mahumud to his followers, I shall have little to remark;—the nature of the institute is intended to oblige mankind to share with the poor a due portion of those benefits they have received through the bounty of Divine Providence. Every Mussulmaun is expected by this law to set apart from his annual income one-fortieth part, denominated Zuckhaut (God's portion), for the sole benefit of the poor. I believe

there are not many,—judging by what I have witnessed amongst the Mussulmaun population of Hindoostaun,—who do not expend a much larger portion of their yearly income in charitable donations, than the enjoined fortieth part.

The poor Syaads are not allowed to receive any relief from "the Zuckhaut;" they being of the Prophet's blood, are not to be included with the indigent for whom these donations are generally set apart. The strict Mussulmaun of the Sheah sect, usually deducts one-tenth from whatever money comes into his possession as "the Syaads' due," to whom it is distributed, as proper objects present themselves to his knowledge; much in the same way as the tribe of Levi are entitled to the tenth of the produce from their brethren of Israel by the Mosaic law.

The Syaads are likewise restricted from accepting many other charitable offerings,—sutkah for instance—by which is meant the several things composing peace-offerings, offerings in atonement, &c. The better to explain this I must here describe some of the habits of the Mussulmaun population:—When any person

escapes from a threatened danger, or accident, their friends send offerings of corn, oil, and money; all that is thus sent to the person preserved, must be touched by his hand and then distributed amongst the poor and needy.

If any member of a family be ill, a tray is filled with corn, and some money laid on it: it is then placed under the bed of the sick person for the night; in the morning this is to be distributed amongst the poor. Some people cook bread, and place it in the same way with money under the bed of the sick. All these things are called Sutkah in whatever form they are planned, which is done in a variety of ways; and when distributed to the poor, are never to be offered to, nor allowed to be accepted by, the Syaad race. The scape-goat, an animal in good health and without blemish, is another offering of the Sutkah denomination: a Syaad is not allowed to be one of the number to run after the goat released from the sick chamber.

When any one is going a journey, the friends send bands of silk or riband, in the folds of

which are secured silver or gold coins; these are to be tied on the arm of the person projecting the journey, and such offerings are called "Emaum Zaumunee," or the Emaum's protection. Should the traveller be distressed on his journey, he may, without blame, make use of any such deposits tied on his arm, but only in emergencies; none such occurring, he is expected, when his journey is accomplished in safety, to divide all these offerings of his friends amongst righteous people. The Syaads may accept these gifts, such being considered holy, —paak is the original word used, literally clean.

They believe the Emaums have knowledge of such things as pertain to the followers of Mahumud and his descendants. Thus they will say, when desiring blessings and comforts for another person, "Emaum Zaumunee, Zaumunee toom kero!" may the Emaums protect you, and give you their safe support!

The tenths, or Syaads' dues, are never appropriated to any other use than the one designed. They thus evince their respect to the descendants of Mahumud; by these tenths the poorer

race of Syaads are mainly supported; they rarely embark in trade, and never can have any share in banking, or such professions as would draw them into dealings of usury. They are chiefly employed as writers, moonshies, maulvees, and moollahs, doctors of law, and readers of the Khoraun; they are allowed to enter the army, to accept offices of state; and if they possess any employment sufficient to support themselves and family, the true Syaad will not accept from his neighbours such charitable donations as may be of service to the poor brethren of his race. The Syaads, however poor, are seldom known to intrude their distresses, patiently abiding until relief be sent through the interposing power of divine goodness.

Such is the way in which they receive the blessings showered by the orderings of the Almighty, that one never hears a Mussulmaun offer thanks to his earthly benefactor, in return for present benefits; but "Shooghur Allah!" all thanks to God! I was somewhat surprised when first acquainted with these people, that they accepted any kind service done them with

the same salutation as when first meeting in the morning, viz. salaam, and a bow. I inquired of The Meer if there was no word in Hindoo-taunie that could express the "Thank you!" so common to us in England? He bade me remark that the Mussulmauns return thanks to God whenever they receive a benefit from mortals, whom they consider but as the agents appointed by God to distribute His gifts. "All thanks to God!" is repeated with every benefit received; and this follows every meal or cup of water as naturally, as to eat or to drink is preceeded by "Bis ma Allah!"—In the name, or to the praise of God!

Amongst the many choice things I have gleaned from the work so often quoted in my Letters, viz. "Hyaatool Kaaloob," the following, through my Meer's aid in translation, may here be inserted.

MAHUMUD'S ADVICE.

"Observe, ye faithful, there are five things most acceptable to God the Creator, from man, His creature:—

1st. " A generous gift, made when you have the greatest necessity yourself for that which you give away.

2nd. " All gifts that are free-will offerings of the heart, neither expecting nor desiring your bounty, should be rewarded, either by returns or acknowledgments.

3rd. " To be most humble, when in the enjoyment of the greatest prosperity.

4th. " To promote peace, when the reason for indulging your anger is most enticing.

5th. " To forgive freely from the heart, when the power to revenge is present with you."

You perceive a system of charitable feeling is inculcated by the laws of Mahumud; and in every-day practice it is found to be the prominent feature in their general habits. It is common with the meanest of the people to offer a share of their food to any one calling upon them at meal-time. I have seen this amiable trait of character in all classes of the people; and often on a river voyage, or a land journey, when the servants cook their dinner under a tree or by the bank of the river, if a dog which they

consider an unclean animal, advances within their reach, a portion of their food is thrown to him with that kindliness of feeling which induces them to share with the hungry, whatever gifts they receive from the Author of all good. Except in seasons of famine, no one need despair of having sufficient to support nature, wherever the Mussulmauns congregate. I speak it to their credit, and in justice to their character.

LETTER XI.

Mussulmaun festivals.—Buckrah Eade—Ishmael believed to have been offered in sacrifice by Abraham and not Isaac.—Descent of the Mussulmauns from Abraham.—The Eade-gaarh.—Presentation of Nuzzas.—Elephants.—Description of the Khillaut (robe of honour).—Customs on the day of Buckrah Eade.—Nou-Roze (New Year's Day).—Manner of its celebration.—The Bussund (Spring-colour).—The Sahbund.—Observances during this month.—Festival of the New Moon.—Superstition of the Natives respecting the influence of the Moon.—Their practices during an eclipse.—Supposed effects of the Moon on a wound.—Medicinal application of lime in Hindoostaun.—Observance of Shubh-burraat.

An account of the Mussulmaun festivals, I imagine, deserves a Letter; for in many of them I have been able to trace, not only the habits and manners of the people with whom I was sojourning, but occasionally marks of their particular faith have been strongly developed in these observances, to most of

which they attach considerable importance. Buckrah Eade, for instance, is a festival about as interesting to the Natives, as Christmas-day is to the good people of England; and the day is celebrated amongst all classes and denominations of Mussulmauns with remarkable zeal and energy.

The particular event which gives rise to Buckrah Eade, is the well-known circumstance of Abraham offering his son in sacrifice to God. The Mussulmauns, however, insist that the son so offered was Ishmael, and not Isaac, as our Scriptures declare. I have before remarked that I had frequent arguments with the learned men of that persuasion on this subject, which provoked a minute investigation of their most esteemed authors, to decide between our opinions. The author of "The Hyaatool Kaaloob," advances many authorities, which the Mussulmauns deem conclusive, all of whom declare that Ishmael was the son demanded and offered in sacrifice; and two only, I think, of the many names that author quotes, were disposed to doubt whether it was Isaac or Ishmael. An

evident proof, I think, that on some former occasion, there had existed a difference of opinion on this subject among men of their persuasion. The result of the present inquiry, however, is that they believe Ishmael was the offering and not Isaac; whilst I remain equally convinced of the correctness of our sacred book.

The Mussulmauns, I should remark, as well as the Jews, trace their origin to Abraham, the former through Ishmael, and the latter through Isaac; and it is more than probable, that to this circumstance may be attributed the decided prejudice of opinion, in favour of Ishmael being the person offered in sacrifice. Whether this be the case or not, these children of Abraham annually testify their reverence for their progenitor, and respect for his faith towards God, in the way most congenial to their particular ideas of honouring the memory of their forefathers.

I have thus attempted to sketch the origin of the festival, it shall now be my task to describe the way in which the Mussulmauns of Hindoostaun celebrate Buckrah Eade.

On this day all classes of people, professing "the faith," sacrifice animals, according to their circumstances; some offer up camels, others sheep and goats, lambs or kids. It is a day of religious veneration, and therefore by the pious prayers are added to sacrifice;—it is also a day of joyful remembrances consequently one of festivity amongst all ranks of the Mussulmaun population.

Kings, Princes, or Nuwaubs, with the whole strength of their establishments, celebrate the event, by going in great state to an appointed place, which is designated "The Eade-Gaarh," where the animals designed for immediate sacrifice are previously conveyed. On the arrival of the cavalcade at the Eade-gaarh, the head Moollah reads the form of prayer appointed for the occasion, and then presents the knife to the royal personage, who with his own hand sheds the blood of the camel he offers in sacrifice, repeating an impressive prayer as he presents the steel to the throat of the animal. The exact moment of the King's sacrifice is announced by signal, when a grand salute from

the artillery and infantry commences the day's rejoicing.

An account of the procession on these occasions may be interesting to my readers, though no description can give an adequate idea of its imposing appearance. I have witnessed the Buckrah Eade celebrations at Lucknow, where expense and good taste are neither wanted nor spared, to do honour to the great occasion.

The several persons forming the King's suite, whether nobles or menials, together with the military, both horse and foot, are all dressed in their best apparel. The elephants have undergone a thorough cleansing in the river, their hides have been well oiled, which gives a jetty hue to the surface, and their heads painted with bright colours, according to the fancy of their keepers; their housings and trappings are the most costly and brilliant the possessors can procure, some with gold, others with silver howdahs (seats), and draperies of velvet or fine cloth embroidered and fringed with gold.

The horses of individuals, and those of the

irregular troops, are, on this occasion, caparisoned with embroidered horsecloths and silver ornaments, necklaces of silver or gold; or in the absence of these costly adornings, the less affluent substitute large coloured beads and tufts of variegated silk on their horses' necks. Many of the horses have stars and crescents painted upon the chest and haunches: the tail and mane are dyed red with mayndhie.

The procession is formed in the following order: Fifty camels, in pairs, carrying swivels, and each attended by two gunners and a camel-driver; the men dressed in clean white dresses, with turbans and sashes of red and green: the trappings of the camel are composed of broad-cloth of the same colours. Next to these is a park of artillery, the men in new regimentals of blue, faced with red and yellow lace. Two troops of horse soldiers, in new regimentals, scarlet cloth unrurkas (coats) and white trowsers, with high-crowned caps of lambskin, similar to the Persian caps: these horsemen have black belts, and are armed with pistols in the holsters, a sabre and lance.

Then follows a regiment of nujeebs (foot soldiers), their jackets red, with small cap turban of black leather ornamented with the kirrich or dirk (part of the armorial bearings of the House of Oude): their trowsers reach no lower than the hams, where they are ornamented with black points turning upwards on the white, leaving the thighs and legs perfectly bare. The dunkah (kettle drums) on a horse, richly ornamented with scarlet cloth drapery, embroidered and fringed with gold, the rider dressed in scarlet and gold, with a turban to correspond, both being ornamented with the royal insignia,—a fish.

The elephant carriages, containing first his Majesty and the Resident, the others conveying the Prime Minister and the favoured nobles of his Majesty's suite, form an impressive feature in the cortège, from their splendour and novelty. The King's carriage is composed chiefly of silver, open on every side, with a canopy of crimson velvet, embroidered and fringed with gold, the curtains and lining to correspond; this carriage is drawn by four elephants, exactly of one size

(the rest have but two), each very richly attired in velvet and gold coverings. The King and his suite are very splendidly dressed in the Native costume. The chowries and afthaadah are flourished before him, and on each side; the royal carriage is guarded by the irregular horse in great numbers, and immediately followed by led horses, very richly caparisoned, their grooms neatly dressed in white, with turbans of red and green. To these succeed the royal naalkie, a species of conveyance supported by bearers, constructed of beautifully wrought gold; the bearers in loose scarlet coats, embroidered with gold bearing the royal insignia on their coats and turbans. A gold palkie, supported in the same style; an elegant state carriage, with eight black horses in hand, the coachman (a European) dressed in scarlet, with a cocked-hat and staff feather.

Hurkaarahs (running messengers,) chobdhaahs with gold and silver staffs, are seen on either side and in front of the King's carriage, reiterating the King's titles and honours as they proceed. Then follow the English gentlemen

composing the King's suite, in their court dresses, on elephants. To them succeed the Native nobility, great officers of state, &c., on many elephants,—I should think more than fifty,—and the whole followed by military, both horse and foot. The procession has an imposing effect, particularly when viewed from an open space. The regiments have each their colours unfurled, and their bands of music playing English pieces. I have often thought if our theatrical managers could witness some of these splendid processions, they might profit by representing on the stage the grand exhibition of an Eastern monarch, which loses much of its splendour by my indifferent powers of description.

After the ceremony at the Eade-gaarh has concluded, the King and his suite return in the same well-arranged order, and arriving at his palace, enters the throne-room, where being seated, he receives nuzzas in due form, presented in turn by every person belonging to the court, whether relations, nobles, courtiers, dependants, servants, or slaves; every

person observing a proper etiquette in their approach to the throne, the inferiors keeping back until their superiors retire,—which each one does immediately after presenting his nuzza; thus confusion is prevented in the hall of audience.

As a description of the ceremony of presenting nuzzas, on such occasions, may be acceptable to some of my friends, I will describe that which I witnessed at the Court of Oude.

The King was seated on his throne of pure gold, dressed in a very costly habit of Persian velvet, embroidered with gold; on his neck, valuable haarhs (necklaces) of diamonds, pearls, rubies and emeralds, were suspended in many rows, reaching from the neck nearly to the waist.

The throne is a flat surface, about two yards square, raised about two feet from the floor, upon three sides of it is a railing; a square canopy, supported by poles, is attached to the four corners of the throne, which, together with the poles, are formed of wood, and cased over with pure gold, into which are set precious

stones of great value. The canopy and cushions, on which the King takes his seat, are of crimson velvet, very richly embroidered with gold and pearls; a deep fringe of pearls of a good size, finishes the border of the canopy. The chattah is of corresponding costly materials (crimson velvet and gold), fringed also with real pearls.

The King's crown is elegantly formed, richly studded with diamonds, and ornamented with handsome plumes of the birds of Paradise. Over his head was supported the velvet chattah. On either side of the throne stood a nobleman with chowries of peacock's-feathers in gold handles, which they kept waving continually over the King's person.

To the right of the throne were gilt chairs with velvet seats placed for the accommodation of the Resident and his lady, who were accompanied by many English ladies and gentlemen standing, as also by the European gentlemen attached to the King's suite: the latter, in their court dresses of puce cloth, richly embroidered with gold, had a very good effect, mingled with the well-dressed lady-visitors of the Resident.

To the left of the throne stood the Native gentlemen holding high offices in the Court of Oude, each richly dressed in the Asiatic costume.

At the King's feet stood the Vizier (Prime Minister), whose business it is, on such occasions, to deposit the nuzzas on the throne after they have been accepted by his Majesty.

As the company advanced the head Chamberlain announced the name and rank of each person in the presence of the King. The second Chamberlain directed such persons, after presenting the nuzza, the way they must retire from the hall.

The nuzzas of the first nobility consisted of twenty-one gold mohurs; those of less exalted persons, were proportioned to their rank and circumstances; whilst servants and slaves, with inferior dependants of the Court, tendered their humble tribute of respect in rupees of silver.

The person presenting, has the offering placed on a clean white folded kerchief; he advances with his head bowed low, until within ten paces of the throne; he then stands erect

for a few seconds, with his hands folded and held forward, after which he bows his head very low three times, and each time places his open hand to his forehead,—this is called "salaaming;" this done, he advances to the foot of the throne, repeats the three salaams, then presents with both hands the nuzza on the kerchief, which the King touches with his hand, and the Vizier receives and deposits with the collected heap by the side of his Majesty.

When the ceremony of presenting nuzzas has concluded, the King rises and advances with the Resident to the centre of the audience hall, where the person in charge of the haarhs* is in attendance with several of these marks of distinction, one of which the King selects and places with his own hands over the head of the Resident; the Resident then takes one and

* Haarh is a name given to any sort of ornament which we should designate a necklace. The haarhs presented on these occasions at the Oude court, are composed of silver ribands very prettily platted and confined at each division of plats by knobs covered with silver riband. The price of these haarhs are from five to twenty-five rupees each, depending on the size.

places it on the King in a similar way. Should the Vizier be in favour at this time, he is invested with the haarh, both by his Majesty and the Resident; but if, unfortunately for him, he does not enjoy his royal master's confidence, he takes this opportunity of testifying his dissatisfaction by omitting the favour to his Vizier. The haarh is actually of very little value but as a badge of distinction peculiar to Native courts, to which the Natives attach so much importance, that I wonder not at their anxiety to be honoured with this distinguishing mark of the King's satisfaction.

European visitors, both male and female, are generally adorned with haarhs on these occasions. The King then conducts the Resident to the entrance,—when taking leave, he pours otta on his hands, with the "Khodah Afiz!" (God be with you!) and sometimes out of compliment to the Resident, his Majesty offers otta also to each of the English visitors, as they pass him at the door.

On these great court days, the Vizier's nuzza is usually of great value,—sometimes a lac of

rupees has been presented, when the Vizier is much in favour, who is sure to receive ten times the value of his nuzza ere the day is passed. When this large sum is presented, the Minister has his one hundred bags (each containing a thousand rupees), covered with crimson silk, and tied with silver ribands, placed on each side the throne prior to the King's arrival; who, on seeing this proof of his faithful servant's attachment, condescends to embrace him in the presence of the assembled court—an honour of vast magnitude in the estimation of Natives.

The King confers favours on, as well as receives homage from, his subjects, on the day of Buckrah Eade. On some titles, or other distinctions are conferred; to others presents, according to his good will and pleasure: many receive khillauts; and should there be an unfortunate omission, in the distribution of princely munificence, that person understands to his sorrow, that he is out of favour, without needing to be told so by word of mouth.

The title of Khaun, Nuwaub, Rajah, or any

other distinction conferred by the King, is accompanied by the dress of honour, and often by elephants, horses, or the particular kind of Native palkie which are alone used by princes and the nobility. The elephant is always given ready furnished with the several necessary appendages, as silver howdah, embroidered jhewls (draperies), &c.; and the horse richly caparisoned for riding.

The naalkie and palkie are vehicles conferred on Native gentlemen with their titles, which cannot be used by any persons than those who have received the grant from their Sovereign; and there is quite as much ambition to be thus distinguished in a Native Court, as may be traced amongst the aspirants for "the orders" in the several European states.

Though the naalkie and palkie are restricted to the use of privileged persons, all are allowed the services of the elephant. I knew a professed beggar, who made his diurnal tour through the city of Lucknow on one. A beggar, however, in Native estimation, is not the despicable creature he is in European opinion; a degree of venera-

tion is always evinced towards men, who live on the casual bounty of their fellow mortals, and profess not to have either a worldly calling or other means of support. The beggar, I allude to, was called Shaah Jhee; he had originally been a travelling mendicant, and made a visit to Lucknow, when the late King was a young man, whom he met by accident outside the town; and, I believe, without knowing to whom he was speaking, predicted some favourable circumstances which should attend him eventually; the young prince then disclosed himself to the beggar, and promised him if his predictions were verified, he would reward him in the way he wished. Shaah Jhee left the Oude district, and travelled over most parts of Hindoostaun. Returning after many years' absence to Lucknow, he found the prince seated on the throne of his ancestors, and watching for a favourable opportunity to present himself, made his claims to the sovereign, who, remembering the circumstance and his promise, conferred the required reward—to be allowed to demand five cowries daily from every shop-

keeper in the city of Lucknow. The King added to this humble demand a house to reside in, and the elephant on which he went to collect his revenue. Eighty-five cowries (shells) are valued at one pice, or a halfpenny; yet so vast is this capital of Oude, that Shaah Jhee was in the receipt of a handsome daily allowance, by this apparently trifling collection.

Most of the respectable gentlemen in Lucknow maintain an elephant for their own use, where it is almost as common to meet them as horses. Though most persons, I observe, avoid falling in with the royal cortège, (which is always announced by the sound of the dunkah), unless they are disposed to court the King's observation; then they draw up their elephant, and oblige the animal to kneel down whilst the King passes on, the owner standing in his howdah to make salaams; others, I have seen, dismount in time, and stand in a humble posture, with the hands folded and the head bowed low, doing reverence and attracting his Majesty's notice as he passes on. These little acts of ceremonious respect are gratifying to the King, and are

frequently the means of advancing the views of the subject to his favour.

The khillauts, presented by the King, vary in the number of the articles composing the gift, as well as in the quality. The personal rank, and sometimes the degree, of estimation in which the receiver is held, is defined by the value and number of an individual's khillaut. I have known some gentlemen tenacious to a foible, about the nature of the khillaut that could consistently be accepted; I have heard it even expressed, "I shall be disgraced in the eyes of the world, if my khillaut has not the full complement usually conferred on men of my rank." It is the honour they value, not the intrinsic worth of the articles, for it is no uncommon thing to find them distributing the dress of honour amongst their dependants, on the same day they have received it.

The splendid articles composing khillauts are as follows: swords with embroidered belts, the handle and scabbard either enamelled or embossed silver, often set with precious stones; the most inferior have silver mountings and

velvet scabbards; shields studded with silver; kirrich (dirk), the handle and sheath equally as rich as the swords; embroidered or gold cloth chupkunds (coats); shawl-stuff labaadahs (pelisses), trimmed with sable; turbans of shawl or muslin; ornaments for the turban of diamonds and emeralds, the inferior of paste; strings of pearls and emeralds for the neck; shawls, always in pairs, of more or less value; shawl-kerchiefs; shawl cummerbunds (girdles); shawl lahaafs (counterpanes); gold cloth, gold and silver muslins, and shawl stuff, in pieces, each being sufficient to form a dress; Benares silks, or rich satin for trousers; pieces of fine embroidered muslin for shirts. These are the usual articles of value given in khillauts to the most exalted favourites. In some instances the King confers one hundred and one pieces in a khillaut; in others seventy-five, and down to five articles, which is the lowest number given in this much-prized dress of honour. In a khillaut of five pieces, I have observed, generally, a coarser kind of gold cloth dress, a coloured muslin turban, a pair

of coarse shawls, a coarse shawl romall (kerchief), and a girdle. I have also observed, that the higher the numbers rise, the quality of the articles increased in value; consequently, when we hear of any one being invested with the highest number, we calculate that each piece is of the very best quality and fabric.

When khillauts are conferred, the investiture usually takes place in the King's presence, who sometimes condescends to place one of the articles on the receiver with his own hands; at other times he merely touches the turban with his hand, and the individuals are clothed by the Prime Minister. After receiving the khillaut, each person approaches the throne and does homage to the King, presenting a nuzza in accordance with his rank, and the value of the khillaut.

The Revenue Collectors and Zemindhaars (landlords of farms) crowd to the Court on these days, to testify their respect and share in the honours distributed with a liberal hand. These persons may well be solicitous to receive this badge of distinction, which they find increases their influence over the Ryotts (cultivators).

On the morning of Buckrah Eade, the King gives a public breakfast at Lucknow, to the Resident and his suite, and to such of the Native nobility as are privileged to "the chair"* at the royal banquets. The breakfast concluded many varieties of sports commence, as elephant-fighting, tiger sports, &c. The entertainment is got up with great magnificence, neither expense nor trouble being spared to render the festivities of the day conspicuous.

After the Resident and his party have retired, the King returns to his private apartments, where the forms of state are thrown aside with the splendid robes; and the ease and comfort of real Asiatic life is again indulged in, without the parade so studiously observed in public, as being essential to the sovereign's dignity. The trammels of state must indeed be irksome to those who indulge in that sort of luxurious ease which forms the chief comfort of Native life.

The evening at Court is passed by the King and his favourite courtiers, with music and the

* Many Native gentlemen are allowed to be seated in the King's presence at Court daily, but not at the banquet, which is a distinction reserved only for the nobility and favourites.

performances of dancing-girls; a variety of fire-work exhibitions; the witticisms of the Court-jesters, and such other amusements as are suited to Asiatic taste.

The magnificent style of celebrating Buckrah Eade at Lucknow, is perhaps unequalled by any other Native Court now existing in Hindoostaun. The rejoicings on this festival are not confined to the higher classes alone; but it is a period of equal interest to every individual of the Mussulmaun community. The custom of the Court is imitated by the subjects in their several grades, each striving to do honour to the day according to their ability. The religious classes add, to their usual Namaaz, the appointed prayer for the occasion of Buckrah Eade.

The rich send presents of goats and sheep to their neighbours and to the poor, so that the meanest of the people are enabled to offer sacrifice and rejoice in the good things of which they partake: new suits of clothes are also distributed to the dependants of the family and to the poor. In short, on this day, there seems a spirit of benevolence abroad, that is even remarkable beyond the general generosity of

their natural character, as all who have any thing to share will assuredly, on this occasion, impart a blessing to the needy, and gratify their friends and acquaintances.

The bride and bridegroom elect, exchange presents of goats, &c.; the tutor writes a copy of verses on the day, and presents it to his pupil; the pupil in return sends his tutor a dress and money to enable him to keep Eade with his family.

The ladies dress in their most costly jewels and apparel to receive or pay visits. The children have their sports and amusements. Whenever I have entered a Native house on these days, all seemed cheerful and happy, and enjoying themselves in whatever way was most congenial to their particular tastes; "every one must be cheerful (they say) on Buckrah Eade."

On this day, millions of animals are sacrificed in remembrance of Abraham's faith. I have often thought how striking is the similarity between the Mosaic and Mussulmaun institutes, —indeed my recollections of Scripture history have frequently been realized in the views I

have had of the domestic habits of the Mussulmauns. They are forbidden the use of unclean animals; the swine is equally abominable to Mussulmauns as to the Jews; neither are they less scrupulous in discarding from their kitchen any kind of animal food prohibited by their laws, or which has not been killed by one of their faith. In this process the person, who is to slay, turns the animal's head towards Mecca, repeats the short appointed prayer, and with one plunge the animal has ceased to feel: they are expert in the art of despatching life, so that the animal's sufferings may not be protracted unnecessarily;—an amiable trait of character and worthy of imitation.

"Nou-Roze" (New Year's Day) is a Festival or Eade of no mean importance in the estimation of Mussulmaun society.

The exact period of commencing the Mussulmaun new year, is the very moment of the sun's entering the sign Aries. This is calculated by those practical astronomers, who are in the

service of most great men in Native cities;—I should tell you they have not the benefit of published almanacks as in England,—and according to the hour of the day or night when the sun passes into that particular sign, so are they directed in the choice of a colour to be worn in their garments on this Eade: if at midnight, the colour would be dark puce, almost a black; if at mid-day, the colour would be the brightest crimson. Thus to the intermediate hours are given a shade of either colour applicable to the time of the night or the day when the sun enters the sign Aries; and whatever be the colour to suit the hour of Nou-Roze, all classes wear the day's livery, from the King to the meanest subject in the city. The King, on his throne, sits in state to receive congratulations and nuzzas from his nobles, courtiers and dependants. "Mabaarukh Nou-Roze!" (May the New Year be fortunate!) are the terms of salutation exchanged by all classes of society, the King himself setting the example. The day is devoted to amusements, a public breakfast at the palace, sending presents, exchanging visits, &c.

The trays of presents prepared by the ladies for their friends are tastefully set out, and the work of many days' previous arrangement. Eggs are boiled hard, some of these are stained in colours resembling our mottled papers; others are neatly painted in figures and devices; many are ornamented with gilding; every lady evincing her own peculiar taste in the prepared eggs for "Nou-Roze." All kinds of dried fruits and nuts, confectionary and cakes, are numbered amongst the necessary articles for this day's offering: they are set out in small earthen plates, lacquered over to resemble silver, on which is placed coloured paper, cut out in curious devices (an excellent substitute for vine leaves) laid on the plate to receive the several articles forming "Nou-Roze" presents.

Amongst the young people these trays are looked forward to with child-like anxiety. The ladies rival each other in their display of novelty and good taste, both in the eatables and the manner of setting them off with effect.

The religious community have prayers read in their family, and by them it is considered both a

necessary duty and a propitious commencement to bring in the new year by "prayer and praises."

When it is known that the Nou-Roze will occur by daylight, the ladies have a custom of watching for the moment the year shall commence by a fresh rose, which being plucked from the stalk is thrown into a basin of water, the eye downwards. They say, this rose turns over of itself towards the sun at the very moment of that luminary passing into the sign Aries. I have often found them thus engaged; but I never could say I witnessed the actual accomplishment of their prediction.

The Nou-Roze teems with friendly tokens between the two families of a bride and bridegroom elect, whose interchange of presents are also strictly observed. The children receive gifts from their elders; their nurses reap a harvest from the day; the tutor writes an ode in praise of his pupil, and receives gifts from the child's parents; the servants and slaves are regaled with dainties and with presents from the superiors of the establishment; the poor are remembered with clothes, money and food;

the ladies make and receive visits; and the domenie attend to play and sing in the zeenahnah. In short, the whole day is passed in cheerful amusements, suited to the retirement of a zeenahnah and the habits of the people.

There is a festival observed at Lucknow called Bussund (spring-colour). I should remark here, that almost all the trees of India have perpetual foliage, as the season approaches for the new leaves to sprout, the young buds force off the old leaves; and when the trees are thus clothed in their first delicate foliage, there is a yellow tinge in the colour which is denominated Bussund (Spring). A day is appointed to be kept under this title, and then every one wears the Bussund colour: no one would be admitted at Court without this badge of the day. The elephants, horses and camels of the King, or of his nobles, are all ornamented with the same colour on their trappings.

The King holds a Court, gives a public breakfast, and exhibits sports with ferocious animals.

The amusements of this day are chiefly confined to the Court: I have not observed much notice taken of it in private life.

The last month of the periodical rains is called Sahbaund. There is a custom observed by the Mussulmaun population, the origin of which has never been clearly explained to me; some say it is in remembrance of the Prophet Elisha or Elijah, and commences the first Friday of Sahbaund, and is followed up every succeeding Friday through this concluding month of the rainy season.

This ceremony may have had its origin with devout persons willing to honour or to invoke the Prophet Elijah, who, as our Scripture informs us, "prayed, and the clouds gave no rain for the space of three years; and again he prayed and the heavens were opened to his prayer." Or in that of Elisha parting the waters with the mantle of Elijah, after succeeding him in the Prophetic office, 2 Kings ii. 14; or a still more probable event, calculated to excite the

pious to some such annual notice as is observed with these people, in the same chapter, the twentieth and following verses, where we find it said of Elisha, "And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought it to him. And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more dearth or barren land. So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake."

The learned men call it a zeenahnah, or children's custom; but it is common to see children of all ages amongst the males, partake of, and enjoy the festival with as much glee as the females or their juniors.

A Bamboo frame is formed to the shape of a Chinese boat; this frame-work is hidden by a covering of gold and silver tissue, silk, or coloured muslin, bordered and neatly ornamented with silver paper. In this light bark many lamps are secreted, of common earthenware. A procession is formed to convey the

tribute, called " Elias ky Kishtee," to the river. The servants of the family, soldiers, and a band of Native music attend in due order of march: the crowd attracted by this childish play is immense, increasing as they advance through the several streets on the way to the river, by all the idlers of the place.

The kishtee (boat) is launched amidst a flourish of trumpets and drums, and the shouts of the populace; the small vessel, being first well lighted, by means of the secreted lamps, moves down gently with the stream. When at a little distance, on a broad river, in the stillness of evening, any one—who did not previously know how these little moving bodies of light were produced—might fancy such fairy scenes as are to be met with in the well-told fables of children's books in happy England.

This custom, though strongly partaking of the superstitious, is not so blameable as that which I have known practised by some men of esteemed good understanding, who having a particular object in view, which they cannot attain by any human stratagem or contrivance

write petitions to the Emaum Mhidhie on Fridays, and by their own hands commit the paper to the river, with as much reverence as if they thought him present in the water to receive it. The petition is always written in the same respectful terms, as inferiors here well know how to address their superiors; and every succeeding Friday the petition is repeated until the object is accomplished, or the petitioner has no further inducement to offer one.

I have made particular inquiries whether such sensible people (as I have seen thus engaged) placed any dependence on this mode of petitioning. The only answer I have received, is, "Those who think proper thus to petition, certainly believe that it will be effectual, if they persevere in it."

The New Moon is a festival in the family of every good Mussulmaun. They date the new moon from the evening it first become visible, and not as we do—from the moment it changes. The event is announced in Native cities by

firing salutes from the field-pieces of Kings, Nuwaubs, &c.

Amongst the religious people there is much preparation in bathing and changing the dress against the evening the moon is expected to be visible, and when the guns have announced that it is visible, they have the Khoraun brought, which they open at the passage where Mahumud praises God for this particular blessing. A small looking glass is then brought, on which passage it is placed, and the book held in such a position that the moon may be first seen by the person reflected in the glass. They then repeat the prayer, expressly appointed for this occasion, and that done, the whole family rise and embrace each other, making salaams and reverence to their superiors and elders. The servants and slaves advance for the same purpose, and nothing is heard for some minutes, but "May the new moon be fortunate!" reiterated from every mouth of the assembled family.

I cannot answer for the motives which actuate the ignorant people to bow when they first see the new moon; but the pious Mussulmaun, I

am assured, bows to the Creator for the visible blessing, and not to the object.

The first eatables handed round to secure good luck and health throughout the month, are sugar-candy and cheese. I fancy this is a mere zeenahnah custom, for I do not find the males so particular about eating this most extraordinary mixture as the females.

The servants' wages are paid by the month, and in well-regulated families, the first day of the moon is hailed by dependants and domestics with no small share of anxiety. Indeed, these people make the moon of much more importance in the regulation of domestic affairs, than the inhabitants of more polished countries, for they attribute the influence of that planet over the inhabitants of the earth in many extraordinary ways. It may be deemed superstitious, but as my business is to relate the most material ceremonies among this people, I cannot well omit noticing some of their observances at this time.

If any person is ill, and bleeding is the only good remedy to be pursued, the age of the moon is first discussed, and if it happens to be near

the full, they are inflexibly resolute, that the patient shall not lose blood until her influence is lessened. And should it happen at the commencement of the second quarter, or a few days after the full, the difficulty is to be overcome by deprecating the evil influence of the moon over the patient, by burning a brand of straw which is flourished about the sick person's head, who is brought out into the moon's presence for this important operation. Many equally extraordinary things of this sort I have been obliged to witness in the zeenahnah.

The full moon is deemed propitious for celebrating the marriage festivals. If this be not possible, care is always to be taken that the ceremony does not fall at the period when she is in the unfavourable sign; they say the happiness of the young couple depends on this being carefully avoided, as in the opinion of every Mussulmaun, "the moon in Scorpio" is unpropitious for any business of moment.

When a journey is contemplated the moon's age is the first consideration; indeed, the favourable signs of Madam Luna's movements are

not only selected for commencing a journey, but for all undertakings of like importance;—whether to build, to write, to plant, to take medicine, &c.

What will be said of the singular custom, "drinking the moon at a draught." A silver basin being filled with water is held in such a situation, that the full moon may be reflected in it; the person to be benefited by this draught is required to look steadfastly at the moon in the basin, then shut his eyes and quaff the liquid at one draught. This remedy is advised by medical professors in nervous cases, and also for palpitations of the heart. I have seen this practised, but I am not aware of any real benefit derived by the patient from the prescription.

When the planet Venus is in conjunction with the moon, they say the time is most favourable to offer prayers to God for any particular object they may have in view. At this time they write charms or talismans to be worn by children. I remember having witnessed a gentleman thus occupied, who wrote little scraps in the Arabic character to distribute amongst

the children of his friends, who wore them enclosed in silver cases on their arms.

An eclipse of the moon is an event of great interest, both with the Mussulmaun and the Hindoo population, although they have very opposite ideas of the causes of an eclipse.

Many of the notions entertained by the lower classes of Mussulmauns upon the nature of an eclipse are borrowed from the Hindoos. Some think that it is caused by the anger of God towards the people of the earth; others say the moon is in debt, and many other equally odd conceits exist amongst the ignorant people, and among them only. Yet a sensation of awe is felt by most; and where is the intelligent creature who can view an eclipse or any other phenomenon of Nature without the same feeling of awe, although all are not equally ready to express the sensation?

Loud cries from the mixed population, Mussulmauns and Hindoos, announce the commencement of an eclipse, whether it be of the sun or the moon. The voice of the Mussulmaun is distinguished by the Namaazies' call to

prayers—"Allah wo uckbaar!" (God alone is great!) To this summons the faithful attend diligently, and they are generally occupied in the form of prayer appointed by Mahumud until the shadow has passed over the sun or moon eclipsed.

The ladies prepare offerings of corn, oil, and money to be distributed amongst the poor. The gentlemen give presents to the needy. The astronomer who predicts to his royal or noble master the exact period of an eclipse, is rewarded, when it is over, with money, a dress, and a crescent of pure gold in some instances. A bride elect sends sutkah* to her intended husband, accompanied by a goat or kid, which must be tied to the leg of his bedstead during the continuance of an eclipse: these offerings are afterwards distributed in charity. Women expecting to become mothers are carefully kept awake during an eclipse, as they declare the infant's security depends on the mother being kept from sleep; they are not allowed to use a

* All offerings of intercession or thanksgivings are denominated sutkah.

needle, scissors, knife, or any other instrument during an eclipse, for fear of drawing blood, which would be injurious at that period, both to the mother and child; neither are the animals in a similar state neglected; a mixture of cow-dung and drugs is rubbed over the belly of such animals, whether cows, sheep, goats, &c., and all these are securely housed until the planet is again resplendent: they fancy that both the animal and its young would be endangered by exposure during the time of the eclipse.

The power of the moon on wounded persons is believed universally to be of dangerous tendency. I have heard many extraordinary relations by people who, as they tell me, have suffered from exposure to the moon whilst a wound was fresh. One person had received a severe sabre-cut on his arm; the place was sewed up by the barber (the only surgeon amongst the Natives), and being much exhausted he laid down to sleep in the open air. The moon was near the full, and after some hours' exposure to her influence he awoke in great agony; the barber examined the arm

early in the morning and found the cut in a state of corruption, the sewing having burst; the wound was cleansed, and dressed with pounded camphor; the place eventually healed, and the man lived many years to tell his story, always declaring his belief that the moon had been the cause of his sufferings; he was the more certain of this as he dreamed whilst exposed to her influence, that a large black woman (an inhabitant of the moon) had wrestled with him, and hurt his wound.

The usual application in India to a fresh wound is that of slacked lime. A man in our employ was breaking wood, the head of the hatchet came off, and the sharp edge fell with considerable force on the poor creature's foot; he bled profusely and fainted, lime was unsparingly applied to the wound, the foot carefully wrapped up, and the man conveyed to his hut on a charpoy (bedstead), where he was kept quiet without disturbing the wound; at the end of a fortnight he walked about, and in another week returned to his labour.

Lime is an article of great service in the do-

mestic economy of the Natives. I have experienced the good effects of this simple remedy for burns or scalds: equal proportions of lime, water, and any kind of oil, made into a thin paste, and immediately applied and repeatedly moistened, will speedily remove the effects of a burn; and if applied later, even when a blister has risen, the remedy never fails: I cannot say how it might act on a wound, the consequence of a neglected burn.

The lime used with pawn by the natives of India is considered very beneficial to health; and they use it in great quantities, considering that they never eat pawn without lime, and the most moderate pawn eaters indulge in the luxury at least eight times in the course of the day. The benefit of lime is worth the consideration of the medical world—as a preventive in some climates, as a renovater in others.

Shubh-burraat, is the designation of one of the months of the Mussulmauns (you are aware their month is the duration of the moon). The

night of the full moon Shubh-burraat is a period of great and interesting importance to the Mussulmaun people of every degree; for on this night they are persuaded the fate of every human being is fixed in heaven; and that whatever is to be their doom is then registered in the Book of Life. Those who are to retain health, life, prosperity, or any other blessing, and those who are to be visited by sickness, sorrows, adversity or death; in short, whatever is to occur throughout the year is on this night assuredly noted in heaven for each individual on earth.

On this night they are instructed also to remember their friends and relatives who have been separated from them by death, and the injunction is followed up with much pious respect and marked veneration. Food is cooked and portioned out in the name of each departed object of their regard, over which the elder of the family,—if a Maulvee is not available,—reads a certain form of prayer called Fahteeah; this done, each portion (if convenient) is conveyed to the several tombs wherein those friends are deposited; or if not convenient to send the

food to the burying ground, it is distributed amongst the poor of the city and the suburbs; the beggars congregating in those places to indulge in the luxuries prepared to the memory of the dead. The food prepared on this occasion must not contain any animal food. Bread of various kinds, sweet rice, and meetah (a mixture of sugar, ghee, and flour), are the usual dainties I have observed in these offerings. Fireworks are in universal request on the night of Shubh-burraat, which is required to be passed in wakefulness; and to this may be ascribed the never-varying custom of letting them off: it is an amusement these people take delight in at all times, and on this occasion most usefully, to keep them awake. The younger branches, at all events, derive this benefit from the pastime.

The religious community make it a night of strict devotion; they offer prayers and intercessions for the souls of their departed friends, since they imagine that this period, of all others, is most favourable to prayer, as they believe the heart is more open to the throne of mercy, the prayer more effectual, and that the real

penitent suing for pardon on the night of Shubh-burraat, is certainly heard and his sins forgiven.

The Sheah sect attach still greater importance to this night, as the anniversary of the birth of Emaum Mhidhie. They also remember Hasan and Hosein as martyrs; and in memory of their sufferings the zeearut (circuit as at Mahurrum), is performed by walking round the ground in front of their apartments, repeating the burial service, with some trifling alterations; likewise the salaams to the Prophets and Emaums are duly performed during this night of fate.

There is a singular opinion current amongst the Mussulmauns, that the trees hold converse at this momentous period. The really pious characters amongst the Mussulmauns declare, that they discountenance superstition in every way; but they strictly adhere to every habit or custom on record, which was the practice of Mahumud and his family, the Emaums. Of course, they do not think the observances of Shubh-burraat are at all bordering on superstition, whatever may be thought of the practice by others.

LETTER XII.

The Zeenahnah.—Its interior described.—Furniture, decorations, &c.—The Purdah (curtains).—Bedstead.—The Musnud (seat of honour).—Mirrors and ornamental furniture disused.—Display on occasions of festivity.—Observations on the Mussulmaun Ladies.—Happiness in their state of seclusion.—Origin of secluding females by Mahumud.—Anecdote.—Tamerlane's command prohibiting females being seen in public.—The Palankeen.—Bearers.—Their general utility and contentedness of disposition.—Habits peculiar to Mussulmaun Ladies.—Domestic arrangements of a Zeenahnah.—Dinner and its accompanying observances.—The Lota and Lugguns.—The Hookha.—Further investigation of the customs adopted in Zeenahnahs.

BEFORE I introduce the ladies of a Mussulmaun zeenahnah to your notice, I propose giving you a description of their apartments.

Imagine to yourself a tolerably sized quadrangle, three sides of which is occupied by habitable buildings, and the fourth by kitchens.

offices, lumber rooms, &c.; leaving in the centre an open court-yard. The habitable buildings are raised a few steps from the court; a line of pillars forms the front of the building, which has no upper rooms; the roof is flat, and the sides and back without windows, or any aperture through which air can be received. The sides and back are merely high walls forming an enclosure, and the only air is admitted from the fronts of the dwelling-place facing the court-yard. The apartments are divided into long halls, the extreme corners having small rooms or dark closets purposely built for the repository of valuables or stores; doors are fixed to these closets, which are the only places I have seen with them in a zeenahnah or mahul (house or palace occupied by females); the floor is either of beaten earth, bricks, or stones; boarded floors are not yet introduced

As they have neither doors nor windows to the halls, warmth or privacy is secured by means of thick wadded curtains, made to fit each opening between the pillars. Some zeenahnahs have two rows of pillars in the halls

with wadded curtains to each, thus forming two distinct halls, as occasion may serve, or greater warmth be required: this is a convenient arrangement where the establishment of servants, slaves, &c., is extensive.

The wadded curtains are called purdahs; these are sometimes made of woollen cloth, but more generally of coarse calico, of two colours, in patchwork style, striped, vandyked, or in some other ingeniously contrived and ornamented way, according to their individual taste.

Besides the purdahs, the openings between the pillars have blinds neatly made of bamboo strips, wove together with coloured cords: these are called jhillmuns or cheeks. Many of them are painted green; others are more gaudy both in colour and variety of patterns. These blinds constitute a real comfort to every one in India, as they admit air when let down, and at the same time shut out flies and other annoying insects; besides which the extreme glare is shaded by them,—a desirable object to foreigners in particular.

The floors of the halls are first matted with

the coarse date-leaf matting of the country, over which is spread shutteringhies (thick cotton carpets, peculiarly the manufacture of the Upper Provinces of India, wove in stripes of blue and white, or shades of blue); a white calico carpet covers the shutteringhie, on which the females take their seat.

The bedsteads of the family are placed, during the day, in lines at the back of the halls, to be moved at pleasure to any chosen spot for the night's repose; often into the open court-yard, for the benefit of the pure air. They are all formed on one principle, differing only in size and quality; they stand about half-a-yard from the floor, the legs round and broad at bottom, narrowing as they rise towards the frame, which is laced over with a thick cotton tape, made for the purpose, and platted in checquers, and thus rendered soft, or rather elastic, and very pleasant to recline upon. The legs of these bedsteads are in some instances gold, silver gilt, or pure silver; others have enamel paintings on fine wood; the inferior grades have them merely of wood painted plain and varnished; the servants' bedsteads

are of the common mango-wood without ornament, the lacing of these for the sacking being of elastic string manufactured from the fibre of the cocoa-nut.

Such are the bedsteads of every class of people. They seldom have mattresses; a soojinee (white quilt) is spread on the lacing, over which a calico sheet, tied at each corner of the bedstead with cords and tassels; several thin flat pillows of beaten cotton for the head,—a muslin sheet for warm weather, and a well wadded ruzzie (coverlid) for winter, is all these children of Nature deem essential to their comfort in the way of sleeping. They have no idea of night dresses; the same suit that adorns a lady, is retained both night and day, until a change be needed. The single article exchanged at night is the deputtah, and that only when it happens to be of silver tissue or embroidery, for which a muslin or calico sheet is substituted.

The very highest circles have the same habits in common with the meanest, but those who can afford shawls of cashmere prefer them for sleeping in, when the cold weather renders

them bearable. Blankets are never used except by the poorest peasantry, who wear them in lieu of better garments night and day in the winter season: they are always black, the natural colour of the wool. The ruzzie of the higher orders are generally made of silk of the brightest hues, well wadded, and lined with dyed muslin of assimilating colour; they are usually bound with broad silver ribands, and sometimes bordered with gold brocaded trimmings. The middling classes have fine chintz ruzzies, and the servants and slaves coarse ones of the same material; but all are on the same plan, whether for a queen or the meanest of her slaves, differing only in the quality of the material.

The mistress of the house is easily distinquished by her seat of honour in the hall of a zeenahnah; a musnud not being allowed to any other person but the lady of the mansion.

The musnud carpet is spread on the floor if possible near to a pillar about the centre of the hall, and is made of many varieties of fabric, —gold cloth, quilted silk, brocaded silk, velvet, fine chintz, or whatever may suit the lady's taste,

circumstances, or convenience. It is about two yards square, and generally bordered or fringed, on which is placed the all-important musnud. This article may be understood by those who have seen a lace-maker's pillow in England, excepting only that the musnud is about twenty times the size of that useful little article in the hands of our industrious villagers. The musnud is covered with gold cloth, silk, velvet, or calico, with square pillows to correspond, for the elbows, the knees, &c. This is the seat of honour, to be invited to share which, with the lady-owner, is a mark of favour to an equal or inferior: when a superior pays a visit of honour, the prided seat is usually surrendered to her, and the lady of the house takes her place most humbly on the very edge of her own carpet.

Looking-glasses or ornamental furniture are very rarely to be seen in the zeenahnahs, even of the very richest females. Chairs and sofas are produced when English visitors are expected; but the ladies of Hindoostaun prefer the usual mode of sitting and lounging on the

carpet; and as for tables, I suppose not one gentlewoman of the whole country has ever been seated at one; and very few, perhaps, have any idea of their useful purposes, all their meals being served on the floor, where dustha-khawns (table-cloths we should call them) are spread, but neither knives, forks, spoons, glasses, or napkins, so essential to the comfortable enjoyment of a meal amongst Europeans. But those who never knew such comforts have no desire for the indulgence, nor taste to appreciate them.

On the several occasions, amongst Native society, of assembling in large parties, as at births and marriages, the halls, although extensive, would be inadequate to accommodate the whole party. They then have awnings of white calico, neatly flounced with muslin, supported on poles fixed in the court yard, and connecting the open space with the great hall, by wooden platforms which are brought to a line with the building, and covered with shutteringhie and white carpets to correspond with the floor-furniture of the hall; and here the ladies

sit by day and sleep by night very comfortably, without feeling any great inconvenience from the absence of their bedsteads, which could never be arranged for the accommodation of so large an assemblage—nor is it ever expected.

The usually barren look of these almost unfurnished halls, is on such occasions quite changed, when the ladies are assembled in their various dresses; the brilliant display of jewels, the glittering drapery of their dress, the various expressions of countenance, and different figures, the multitude of female attendants and slaves, the children of all ages and sizes in their variously ornamented dresses, are subjects to attract both the eye and the mind of an observing visitor; and the hall, which when empty appeared desolate and comfortless, thus filled, leaves nothing wanting to render the scene attractive.

The buzz of human voices, the happy playfulness of the children, the chaste singing of the domenies fill up the animated picture. I have sometimes passed an hour or two in witnessing their innocent amusements, without any feeling of regret for the brief sacrifice of time I had

made. I am free to confess, however, that I have returned to my tranquil home with increased delight after having witnessed the bustle of a zeenahnah assembly. At first I pitied the apparent monotony of their lives; but this feeling has worn away by intimacy with the people, who are thus precluded from mixing generally with the world. They are happy in their confinement; and never having felt the sweets of liberty, would not know how to use the boon if it were to be granted them. As the bird from the nest immured in a cage is both cheerful and contented, so are these females. They have not, it is true, many intellectual resources, but they have naturally good understandings, and having learned their duty they strive to fulfil it. So far as I have had any opportunity of making personal observations on their general character they appear to me obedient wives, dutiful daughters, affectionate mothers, kind mistresses, sincere friends, and liberal benefactresses to the distressed poor. These are their moral qualifications, and in their religious duties, they are zealous in per-

forming the several ordinances which they have been instructed by their parents or husbands to observe. If there be any merit in obeying the injunctions of their Lawgiver, those whom I have known most intimately, deserve praise since "they are faithful in that they profess."

To ladies accustomed from infancy to confinement this is by no means irksome; they have their employments and their amusements, and though these are not exactly to our taste, nor suited to our mode of education, they are not the less relished by those for whom they were invented. They perhaps wonder equally at some of our modes of dissipating time, and fancy we might spend it more profitably. Be that as it may, the Mussulmaun ladies, with whom I have been long intimate, appear to me always happy, contented, and satisfied with the seclusion to which they were born; they desire no other, and I have ceased to regret they cannot be made partakers of that freedom of intercourse with the world, we deem so essential to our happiness, since their health suffers nothing from that confinement, by which they are preserved

from a variety of snares and temptations; besides which, they would deem it disgraceful in the highest degree to mix indiscriminately with men who are not relations. They are educated from infancy for retirement, and they can have no wish that the custom should be changed, which keeps them apart from the society of men, who are not very nearly related to them. Female society is unlimited, and that they enjoy without restraint.

A lady whose friendship I have enjoyed from my first arrival in India, heard me very often speak of the different places I had visited, and she fancied her happiness very much depended on seeing a river and a bridge. I undertook to gain permission from her husband and father, that the treat might be permitted; they, however, did not approve of the lady being gratified, and I was vexed to be obliged to convey the disappointment to my friend. She very mildly answered me, "I was much to blame to request what I knew was improper for me to be indulged in; I hope my husband and family will not be displeased with me for my childish wish; pray make them understand how much I repent

of my folly. I shall be ashamed to speak on the subject when we meet."

I was anxious to find out the origin of secluding females in the Mussulmaun societies of Hindoostaun, as I could find no example in the Mosaic law, which appears to have been the pattern Mahumud followed generally in domestic habits. I am told by the best possible authority, that the first step towards the seclusion of females, occurred in the life of Mahumud, by whose command the face and figure of women were veiled on their going from home, in consequence of some departure from strict propriety in one of his wives, (Ayashur, the daughter of Omir); she is represented to have been a very beautiful woman, and was travelling with Mahumud on a journey in Arabia.

" The beautiful Ayashur, on her camel, was separated from the party; she arrived at the serai (inn, or halting-place) several hours after they had encamped, and declared that her delay was occasioned by the loss of a silver bangle from her ancle, which after some trouble she had discovered, and which she produced in a

bruised state in testimony of her assertion. Mahumud was displeased, and her father enraged beyond measure at his daughter's exposing herself to the censure of the public, by allowing any thing to detach her from the party. Mahumud assuaged Omir's anger by a command then first issued, "That all females, belonging to the faithful, should be compelled to wear a close veil over their face and figure whenever they went abroad."

In Arabia and Persia the females are allowed to walk or ride out with a sort of hooded cloak, which falls over the face, and has two eye-holes for the purpose of seeing their way. They are to be met with in the streets of those countries without a suspicion of impropriety when thus habited.

The habit of strict seclusion, however, originated in Hindoostaun with Tamerlane the conqueror of India.

When Tamerlane with his powerful army entered India, he issued a proclamation to all his followers to the following purport, "As they were now in the land of idolatry and amongst a

strange people, the females of their families should be strictly concealed from the view of strangers;" and Tamerlane himself invented the several covered conveyances which are to the present period of the Mussulmaun history in use, suited to each grade of female rank in society. And the better to secure them from all possibility of contamination by their new neighbours, he commanded that they should be confined to their own apartments and behind the purdah, disallowing any intercourse with males of their own persuasion even, who were not related by the nearest ties, and making it a crime in any female who should willingly suffer her person to be seen by men out of the prescribed limits of consanguinity.

Tamerlane, it may be presumed, was then ignorant of the religious principles of the Hindoos. They are strictly forbidden to have intercourse or intermarry with females who are not strictly of their own caste or tribe, under the severe penalty of losing that caste which they value as their life. To this may be attributed, in a great degree, the safety with which

female foreigners travel daak (post) in their palankeens, from one point of the Indian continent to another, without the knowledge of five words of the Hindoostaunie tongue, and with no other servant or guardian but the daak-bearers, who carry them at the rate of four miles an hour, travelling day and night successively.

The palankeen is supported on the shoulders of four bearers at once,—two having the front pole attached to the vehicle, and two supporting the pole behind. The four bearers are relieved every five or six minutes by other four, making the set of eight to each palankeen,—this set conveys their burden from eight to ten miles, where a fresh party are in waiting to relieve them, and so on to the extent of the projected journey; much in the same way as relays of horses are stationed for post-travelling in England. Perhaps the tract of country passed through may not present a single hut or habitation for miles together, often through jungles of gloomy aspect; yet with all these obstacles, which would excite fear or distrust in more civilized parts of the world, females travel

in India with as perfect security from insult as if they were guarded by a company of sepoys, or a troop of cavalry.

I am disposed to think that the invention of covered conveyances by Tamerlane first gave rise to the bearers. It seems so probable that the conqueror of the Hindoos should have been the first to degrade human nature, by compelling them to bear the burden of their fellow-creatures. I can never forget the first impression on my mind, when witnessing this mode of conveyance on my landing at Calcutta; and although I am willing to agree that the measure is one of vast utility in this climate, and to acknowledge with gratitude the benefit I have derived by this personal convenience, yet I never seat myself in the palankeen or thonjaun without a feeling bordering on self-reproach, as being one amongst the number to perpetuate the degradation of my fellow-mortals. They, however, feel nothing of this sentiment themselves, for they are trained from boyhood to the toil, as the young ox to the yoke. It is their business; the means of comfort is

derived to them by this service; they are happy in the employment, and generally cheerful, and form a class of people in themselves respected by every other both for their services and for their general good behaviour. In the houses of foreigners they are the most useful amongst the whole establishment; they have charge of property, keep the furniture in exact order, prepare the beds, the lamps, and the candles, where wax is used. Tallow having beef-fat in its manufacture is an abomination to the Hindoos, by whom it is considered unholy to slay, or even to touch any portion of the slaughtered cattle of their respect: for believing in transmigration, they affirm that these animals receive the souls of their departed relations. The bearers make the best of nurses to children, and contribute to the comfort of their employer by pulling the punkah night and day: in short, so necessary are these servants to the domestic economy of sojourners in the East, that their merits as a people must be a continual theme of praise; for I know not how an English establishment could be conducted with any

degree of comfort without these most useful domestics. But I have allowed my pen to stray from the subject of female seclusion, and will here bring that part of my history to a close in very few words.

Those females who rank above peasants or inferior servants, are disposed from principle to keep themselves strictly from observation; all who have any regard for the character or the honour of their house, seclude themselves from the eye of strangers, carefully instructing their young daughters to a rigid observance of their own prudent example. Little girls, when four years old, are kept strictly behind the purdah, and when they move abroad it is always in covered conveyances, and under the guardianship of a faithful female domestic, who is equally tenacious as the mother to preserve the young lady's reputation unblemished by concealing her from the gaze of men.

The ladies of zeenahnah life are not restricted from the society of their own sex; they are, as I have before remarked, extravagantly fond of company, and equally as hospitable when en-

tertainers. To be alone is a trial to which they are seldom exposed, every lady having companions amongst her dependants; and according to her means the number in her establishment is regulated. Some ladies of rank have from two to ten companions, independent of slaves and domestics; and there are some of the Royal family at Lucknow who entertain in their service two or three hundred female dependants, of all classes. A well-filled zeenahnah is a mark of gentility; and even the poorest lady in the country will retain a number of slaves and domestics, if she cannot afford companions; besides which they are miserable without society, the habit of associating with numbers having grown up with infancy to maturity: "to be alone" is considered, with women thus situated, a real calamity.

On occasions of assembling in large parties, each lady takes with her a companion besides two or three slaves to attend upon her, no one expecting to be served by the servants of the house at which they are visiting. This swells the numbers to be provided for; and as the visit is

always for three days and three nights (except on Eades, when the visit is confined to one day), some forethought must be exercised by the lady of the house, that all may be accommodated in such a manner as may secure to her the reputation of hospitality.

The kitchen and offices to the zeenahnah, I have remarked, occupy one side of the quadrangle; they face the great or centre hall appropriated to the assembly. These kitchens, however, are sufficiently distant to prevent any great annoyance from the smoke;—I say smoke, because chimneys have not yet been introduced into the kitchens of the Natives. The fireplaces are all on the ground, something resembling stoves, each admitting one saucepan, the Asiastic style of cooking requiring no other contrivance. Roast or boiled joints are never seen at the dinner of a Native: a leg of mutton or sirloin of beef would place the hostess under all sorts of difficulties, where knives and forks are not understood to be amongst the useful appendages of a meal. The variety of their dishes are countless, but stews and curries are

the chief; all the others are mere varieties. The only thing in the shape of roast meats, are small lean cutlets bruised, seasoned and cemented with pounded poppy-seed, several being fastened together on skewers: they are grilled or roasted over a charcoal fire spread on the ground, and then called keebaab, which word implies, roast meat.

The kitchen of a zeenahnah would be inadequate to the business of cooking for a large assembly; the most choice dishes only (for the highly favoured guests), are cooked by the servants of the establishment. The needed abundance required on entertaining a large party is provided by a regular bazaar cook, several of whom establish themselves in Native cities, or wherever there is a Mussulmaun population. Orders being previously given, the morning and evening dinners are punctually forwarded at the appointed hours in covered trays, each tray having portions of the several good things ordered, so that there is no confusion in serving out the feast on its arrival at the mansion. The food thus prepared by the bazaar cook (naunbye,

he is called), is plain boiled-rice, sweet-rice, kheer (rice-milk), mautungun (rice sweetened with the addition of preserved fruits, raisins, &c., coloured with saffron), sallons (curries) of many varieties, some cooked with vegetables, others with unripe fruits with or without meat; pillaus of many sorts, keebaabs, preserves, pickles, chatnees, and many other things too tedious to admit of detail.

The bread in general use amongst Natives is chiefly unleavened; nothing in the likeness of English bread is to be seen at their meals; and many object to its being fermented with the intoxicating toddy (extracted from a tree). Most of the Native bread is baked on iron plates over a charcoal fire. They have many varieties, both plain and rich, and some of the latter resembles our pastry, both in quality and flavour.

The dinners, I have said, are brought into the zeenahnah ready dished in the Native earthenware, on trays; and as they neither use spoons or forks, there is no great delay in setting out the meal where nothing is required for display

or effect, beyond the excellent quality of the food and its being well cooked. In a large assembly all cannot dine at the dustha-khawn of the lady-hostess, even if privileged by their rank; they are, therefore, accommodated in groups of ten, fifteen, or more, as may be convenient; each lady having her companion at the meal, and her slaves to brush off the intruding flies with a chowrie, to hand water, or to fetch or carry any article of delicacy from or to a neighbouring group. The slaves and servants dine in parties after their ladies have finished, in any retired corner of the court-yard—always avoiding as much as possible the presence of their superiors.

Before any one touches the meal, water is carried round for each lady to wash the hand and rinse the mouth. It is deemed unclean to eat without this form of ablution, and the person neglecting it would be held unholy; this done, the lady turns to her meal, saying, "Bis ma Allah!"—(In the name or to the praise of God!) and with the right hand conveys the food to her mouth, (the left is never

used at meals); and although they partake of every variety of food placed before them with no other aid than their fingers, yet the mechanical habit is so perfect, that they neither drop a grain of rice, soil the dress, nor retain any of the food on their fingers. The custom must always be offensive to a foreign eye, and the habit none would wish to copy; yet every one who witnesses must admire the neat way in which eating is accomplished by these really "children of Nature."

The repast concluded, the lota (vessel with water), and the luggun (to receive the water in after rinsing the hands and mouth), are passed round to every person, who having announced by the "Shuggur Allah!"—All thanks to God!—that she has finished, the attendants present first the powdered peas, called basun,—which answers the purpose of soap in removing grease, &c., from the fingers,—and then the water in due course. Soap has not even yet been brought into fashion by the Natives, except by the washermen; I have often been

surprised that they have not found the use of soap a necessary article in the nursery, where the only substitute I have seen is the powdered pea.

Lotas and lugguns are articles in use with all classes of people; they must be poor indeed who do not boast of one, at least, in their family. They are always of metal, either brass, or copper lacquered over, or zink; in some cases, as with the nobility, silver and even gold are converted into these useful articles of Native comfort.

China or glass is comparatively but little used; water is their only beverage, and this is preferred, in the absence of metal basins, out of the common red earthen katorah (cup shaped like a vase).

China dishes, bowls, and basins, are used for serving many of the savoury articles of food in; but it is as common in the privacy of the palace, as well as in the huts of the peasantry, to see many choice things introduced at meals served up in the rude red earthen platter; many of

the delicacies of Asiatic cookery being esteemed more palatable from the earthen flavour of the new vessel in which it is served.

I very well remember the first few days of my sojourn at Lucknow, feeling something bordering on dissatisfaction, at the rude appearance of the dishes containing choice specimens of Indian cookery, which poured in (as is customary upon fresh arrivals) from the friends of the family I had become a member of. I fancied, in my ignorance, that the Mussulmaun people perpetuated their prejudices even to me, and that they must fear I should contaminate their china dishes; but I was soon satisfied on this point : I found, by experience, that brown earthen platters were used by the nobility from choice; and in some instances, the viand would have wanted its greatest relish if served in China or silver vessels. Custom reconciles every thing: I can drink a draught of pure water now from the earthen katorah of the Natives with as much pleasure as from a glass or a silver cup, and feel as well satisfied with

their dainties out of an earthen platter, as when conveyed in silver or China dishes.

China tea sets are very rarely found in the zeenahnah; tea being used by the Natives more as a medicine than a refreshment, except by such gentlemen as have frequent intercourse with the "Sahib Logue," (English gentry), among whom they acquire a taste for this delightful beverage. The ladies, however, must have a severe cold to induce them to partake of the beverage even as a remedy, but by no means as a luxury. I imagined that the inhabitants of a zeenahnah were sadly deficient in actual comforts, when I found, upon my first arrival in India, that there were no preparations for breakfast going forward: every one seemed engaged in pawn eating, and smoking the hookha, but no breakfast after the morning Namaaz. I was, however, soon satisfied that they felt no sort of privation, as the early meal so common in Europe has never been introduced in Eastern circles. Their first meal is a good substantial dinner, at ten, eleven, or twelve

o'clock, after which follows pawn and the hookha; to this succeeds a sleep of two or three hours, providing it does not impede the duty of prayer;—the pious, I ought to remark, would give up every indulgence which would prevent the discharge of this duty. The second meal follows in twelve hours from the first, and consists of the same substantial fare; after which they usually sleep again until the dawn of day is near at hand.

It is the custom amongst Natives to eat fruit after the morning sleep, when dried fruits, confectionary, radishes, carrots, sugar-cane, green peas, and other such delicacies, are likewise considered wholesome luxuries, both with the ladies and the children. A desert immediately after dinner is considered so unwholesome, that they deem our practice extremely injudicious. Such is the difference of custom; and I am disposed to think their fashion, in this instance, would be worth imitating by Europeans whilst residing in India.

I have been much amused with the curious inquiries of a zeenahnah family when the gar-

dener's dhaullie is introduced. A dhaullie, I must first tell you, is a flat basket, on which is arranged, in neat order, whatever fruit, vegetables, or herbs are at the time in season, with a nosegay of flowers placed in the centre. They will often ask with wonder—"How do these things grow?"—"How do they look in the ground?"—and many such child-like remarks have I listened to with pity, whilst I have relieved my heart by explaining the operations of Nature in the vegetable kingdom, a subject on which they are perfectly ignorant, and, from the habits of seclusion in which they live, can never properly be made to understand or enjoy.

I have said water is the only beverage in general use amongst the Mussulmaun Natives. They have sherbet, however, as a luxury on occasions of festivals, marriages, &c. This sherbet is simply sugar and water, with a flavour of rose-water, or kurah added to it.

The hookha is almost in general use with females. It is a common practice with the lady of the house to present the hookha she is smoking to her favoured guest. This mark of attention

is always to be duly appreciated; but such is the deference paid to parents, that a son can rarely be persuaded by an indulgent father or mother to smoke a hookha in their revered presence;—this praiseworthy feeling originates not in fear, but real genuine respect. The parents entertain for their son the most tender regard; and the father makes him both his companion and his friend; yet the most familiar endearments do not lessen the feeling of reverence a good son entertains for his father. This is one among the many samples of patriarchal life, my first Letter alluded to, and which I can never witness in real life, without feeling respect for the persons who follow up the patterns I have been taught to venerate in our Holy Scripture.

The hookha, as an indulgence or a privilege, is a great definer of etiquette. In the presence of the King or reigning Nuwaub, no subject, however high he may rank in blood or royal favour, can presume to smoke. In Native courts, on state occasions, hookhas are presented only to the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, or the Resident at his Court,

who are considered equals in rank, and therefore entitled to the privilege of smoking with him; and they cannot consistently resist the intended honour. Should they dislike smoking, a hint is readily understood by the hookha-bahdhaar to bring the hookha, charged with the materials, without the addition of fire. Application of the munall (mouth-piece) to the mouth, indicates a sense of the honour conferred.

LETTER XIII.

Plurality of wives.—Mahumud's motive for permitting this privilege.—State of society at the commencement of the Prophet's mission.—His injunctions respecting marriage.—Parents invariably determine on the selection of a husband.—First marriages attended by a public ceremony.—The first wife takes precedence of all others.—Generosity of disposition evinced by the Mussulmaun ladies.—Divorces obtained under certain restrictions.—Period of solemnizing marriage.—Method adopted in choosing a husband or wife.—Overtures and contracts of marriage, how regulated.—Mugganee, the first contract.—Dress of the bride elect on this occasion.—The ceremonies described as witnessed.—Remarks on the bride.—Present from the bridegroom on Buckrah Eade.

THE Mussulmauns have permission from their Lawgiver to be pluralists in wives, as well as the Israelites of old. Mahumud's motive for restricting the number of wives each man might lawfully marry, was, say his biographers, for the purpose of reforming the then existing

state of society, and correcting abuses of long standing amongst the Arabians.

My authority tells me, that at the period of Mahumud's commencing his mission, the Arabians were a most abandoned and dissolute people, guilty of every excess that can debase the character of man: drunkards, profligate, and overbearing barbarians, both in principle and action. Mahumud is said unvariedly to have manifested kindly feelings towards the weaker sex, who, he considered, were intended to be the companion and solace of man, and not the slave of his ungovernable sensuality or caprice; he set the best possible example in his own domestic circle, and instituted such laws as were then needed to restrain vice and promote the happiness of those Arabians who had received him as a Prophet. He forbade all kinds of fermented liquors, which were then in common use; and to the frequent intoxication of the men, were attributed their vicious habits, base pursuits, and unmanly cruelty to the poor females. Mahumud's code of laws relating to marriage, restricted them to a limited number

of wives; for at that period they all possessed crowded harems, many of the inhabitants of which were the victims of their reckless persecution; young females torn from the bosom of their families and immured in the vilest state of bondage, to be cast out upon the wide world to starvation and misery, whenever the base master of the house or tent desired to make room for a fresh supply, often the spoils of his predatory excursions.

By the laws of Mahumud his followers are restrained from concubinage; they are equally restricted from forced marriages. The number of their wives must be regulated by their means of supporting them, the law strictly forbidding neglect or unkind treatment of any one of the number his followers may deem it convenient to marry.

At the period when Mahumud issued these necessary laws for the security of female comfort and the moral habits of the males, there existed a practice with the Arabs of forcing young women to marry against their inclination, adding, year by year, to the many wretched

creatures doomed, for a time, to all the miseries of a crowded hut; and at last, when tired of their persons or unable to provide them with sustenance, turning them adrift without a home, a friend, or a meal. To the present day the law against forced marriages is revered, and no marriage contract can be deemed lawful without the necessary form of inquiry by the Maulvee, who, in the presence of witnesses, demands of the young lady, "whether the contract is by her own free will and consent?" This, however, I am disposed to think, in the present age, is little else than a mere form of "fulfilling the law," since the engagement is made by the parents of both parties, the young couple being passive subjects to the parental arrangement, for their benefit as they are assured. The young lady, from her rigid seclusion, has no prior attachment, and she is educated to be "obedient to her husband." She is taught from her earliest youth, to look forward to such match as her kind parents may think proper to provide for her; and, therefore, can have no objection to accepting the husband selected

for her by them. The parents, loving their daughter, and aware of the responsibility resting on them, are cautious in selecting for their girls suitable husbands, according to their particular view of the eligibility of the suitor.

The first marriage of a Mussulmaun is the only one where a public display of the ceremony is deemed necessary, and the first wife is always considered the head of his female establishment. Although he may be the husband of many wives in the course of time, and some of them prove greater favourites, yet the first wife takes precedence in all matters where dignity is to be preserved. And when the several wives meet—each have separate habitations if possible—all the rest pay to the first wife that deference which superiority exacts from inferiors; not only do the secondary wives pay this respect to the first, but the whole circle of relations and friends make the same distinction, as a matter of course; for the first wife takes precedence in every way.

Should the first wife fortunately present her husband with a son, he is the undisputed heir;

but the children of every subsequent wife are equals in the father's estimation. Should the husband be dissolute and have offspring by concubines—which is not very common,—those children are remembered and provided for in the distribution of his property; and, as very often occurs, they are cherished by the wives with nearly as much care as their own children; but illegitimate offspring very seldom marry in the same rank their father held in society.

The latitude allowed by "the law" preserves the many-wived Mussulmaun from the world's censure; and his conscience rests unaccused when he adds to his numbers, if he cannot reproach himself with having neglected or unkindly treated any of the number bound to him, or their children. But the privilege is not always indulged in by the Mussulmauns; much depends on circumstances, and more on the man's disposition. If it be the happy lot of a kind-hearted good man to be married to a woman of assimilating mind, possessing the needful requisites to render home agreeable, and a prospect

of an increasing family, then the husband has no motive to draw him into further engagements, and he is satisfied with one wife. Many such men I have known in Hindoostaun, particularly among the Syaads and religious characters, who deem a plurality of wives a plague to the possessors in proportion to their numbers.

The affluent, the sensualist, and the ambitious, are most prone to swell the numbers in their harem. With some men, who are not highly gifted intellectually, it is esteemed a mark of gentility to have several wives.

There are some instances of remarkable generosity in the conduct of good wives (which would hardly gain credit with females differently educated), not necessary to the subject before me; but I may here add to the praise of a good wife among these people, that she never utters a reproach, nor gives evidence by word or manner in her husband's presence that she has any cause for regret; she receives him with undisguised pleasure, although she has just before learned that another member has been added to his well-peopled harem. The good

and forbearing wife, by this line of conduct, secures to herself the confidence of her husband; who, feeling assured that the amiable woman has an interest in his happiness, will consult her and take her advice in the domestic affairs of his children by other wives, and even arrange by her judgment all the settlements for their marriages, &c. He can speak of other wives without restraint,—for she knows he has others,—and her education has taught her, that they deserve her respect in proportion as they contribute to her husband's happiness. The children of her husband are admitted at all times and seasons, without restraint or prejudice; she loves them next to her own, because they are her husband's. She receives the mothers of such children without a shade of jealousy in her manner, and delights in distinguishing them by favours and presents according to their several merits. From this picture of many living wives in Mussulmaun society, it must not be supposed I am speaking of women without attachment to their husbands; on the contrary, they are persons who are really susceptible of

pure love, and the generosity of their conduct is one of the ways in which they prove themselves devoted to their husband's happiness. This, they say, was the lesson taught them by their amiable mother, and this is the example they would set for the imitation of their daughters.

I do not mean to say this is a faithful picture of all the females of zeenahnah life. The mixture of good and bad tempers or dispositions is not confined to any class or complexion of people, but is to be met with in every quarter of the globe. In general, I have observed those females of the Mussulmaun population who have any claim to genteel life, and whose habits are guided by religious principles, evince such traits of character as would constitute the virtuous and thoroughly obedient wife in any country; and many, whom I have had the honour to know personally, would do credit to the most enlightened people in the world.

Should the first wife prove a termagant or unfaithful—rare occurrences amongst the inmates of the harem,—the husband has the liberty

of divorcing her by paying down her stipulated dowry. This dowry is an engagement made by the husband on the night of Baarraat (when the bridegroom is about to take his bride from her parents to his own home). On which occasion the Maulvee asks the bridegroom to name the amount of his wife's dowry, in the event of separation; the young man is at liberty to name any sum he pleases. It would not prevent the marriage if the smallest amount were promised; but he is in the presence of his bride's family, and within her hearing also, though he has not yet seen her;—it is a critical moment for him, thus surrounded. Besides, as he never intends to separate from the lady, in the strict letter of the law, he cannot refrain from gratifying those interested in the honour he is about to confer by the value of the promised dowry, and, therefore, he names a very heavy sum, which perhaps his whole generation never could have collected in their joint lives. This sum would of itself be a barrier to divorce; but that is not the only object

which influences the Mussulmaun generally to wave the divorce; it is because they would not publish their own disgrace, by divorcing an unfaithful or undutiful wife.

If the first wife dies, a second is sought after on the same principle which guided the first—"a superior to head his house." In this case there would be the same public display which marked the first wife's marriage; all the minor or secondary wives being introduced to the zeenahnah privately; they are in consequence termed Dhollie wives, or brought home under cover.

Many great men appear to be close imitators of King Solomon, with whose history they are perfectly conversant, for I have heard of the sovereign princes in Hindoostaun having seven or eight hundred wives at one time in their palaces. This is hearsay report only, and I should hope an exaggeration.

The first marriage is usually solemnized when the youth is eighteen, and the young lady thirteen, or fourteen at the most; many are married at an earlier age, when, in the opinion of the

parents, an eligible match is to be secured. And in some cases, where the parents on both sides have the union of their children at heart, they contract them at six or seven years old, which marriage they solemnly bind themselves to fulfil when the children have reached a proper age; under these circumstances the children are allowed to live in the same house, and often form an attachment for each other, which renders their union a life of real happiness.

There are to be found in Mussulmaun society, parents of mercenary minds, who prefer giving their daughters in marriage as dhollie wives to noblemen or men of property, to the preferable plan of uniting them with a husband of their own grade, with whom the girl would most likely live without a rival in the mud-walled tenement; this will explain the facilities offered to a sovereign or nobleman in extending the numbers of his harem.

Some parents excuse themselves in thus disposing of their daughters on the score of poverty, and the difficulty they find in defray-

ing the expenses of a wedding: this I conceive to be one great error in the economy of the Mussulmaun people,—unnecessary expense incurred in their marriage ceremonies, which hampers them through life in their circumstances. Parents, however poor, will not allow their daughter to be conveyed from their home, where the projected union is with an equal, without a seemingly needless parade of music, and a marriage-portion in goods and chattels, if they have no fortune to give beside; then the expense of providing dinners for friends to make the event conspicuous, and the useless articles of finery for the girl's person, with many other ways of expending money, to the detriment of the parents' finances, without any very substantial benefit to the young couple. But this dearly-loved custom cannot be passed over; and if the parents find it impossible to meet the pecuniary demands of these ceremonies, the girl has no alternative but to live out her days singly, unless by an agent's influence she is accepted as a dhollie wife to some man of wealth.

Girls are considered to have passed their prime when they number from sixteen to eighteen years; even the poorest peasant would object to a wife of eighteen.

There has been the same difficulty to encounter in every age of Mussulmaun history in Hindoostaun; and in the darker periods of civilization, the obstacles to settling their daughters to advantage induced the villagers and the uneducated to follow the example of the Rajpoots, viz., to destroy the greater proportion of females at their birth. In the present age, this horrid custom is never heard of amongst any classes of the Mussulmaun population; but by the Rajpoot Hindoos it is still practised, as one of their chiefs very lately acknowledged in the presence of a friend of mine. I have often heard Meer Hadjee Shaah declare, that it was a common occurrence within his recollection, among the lower classes of the people in the immediate vicinity of Loodesanah, where he lived when a boy; and that the same practice existed in the Oude territory, amongst the peasantry even at a much later date. One of the Nuwaubs of

Oude,—I think Asoof ood Dowlah,—hearing with horror of the frequent recurrence of this atrocity in the remote parts of his province, issued a proclamation to his subjects, commanding them to desist from the barbarous custom; and, as an inducement to the wicked parents to preserve their female offspring alive, grants of land were to be awarded to every female as a marriage-portion, on her arriving at a proper age.

It is generally to be observed in a Mussulmaun's family, even at this day, that the birth of a girl produces a temporary gloom, whilst the birth of a boy gives rise to a festival in the zeenahnah. Some are wicked enough to say, "It is more honourable to have sons than daughters," but I believe the real cause is the difficulty to be encountered in settling the latter suitably.

The important affair of fixing upon a desirable match for their sons and daughters is the source of constant anxiety in the family of every Mussulmaun, from the children's earliest years to the period of its accomplishment.

There is a class of people who make it the

business of their lives to negotiate marriages. Both men and women of this description are of course ingeniously expert in the art of talking, and able to put the best colouring on the affair they undertake; they occupy every day of their lives in roving about from house to house, and, as they have always something entertaining to say, they generally gain easy admittance; they make themselves acquainted with the domestic affairs of one family in order to convey them to another, and so continue in their line of gossiping, until the economy of every person's house is familiar to all. The female gossip in her researches in zeenahnahs, finds out all the expectations a mother entertains for her marriageable sons or daughters, and details whatever she learns in such or such a zeenahnah, as likely to meet the views of her present hostess. Every one knows the object of these visits, and if they have any secret that the world may not participate in, there is due caution observed that it may not transpire before this Mrs. Gad-about.

When intelligence is brought, by means of such agency, to the mother of a son who hap-

pens to be marriageable, that a lady of proper rank has a daughter to be sought, she consults with her husband, and further inquiries are instituted amongst their several friends, male and female; after due deliberation, the connexion being found desirable, the father will consult an omen before negotiations are commenced. The omen to decide the important step is as follows: —Several slips of paper are cut up, on half the number is written "to be," on the other half, "not to be;" these papers are mixed together and placed under the prayer-carpet. When the good Mussulmaun is preparing for his evening Namaaz he fails not in his devotions to ask for help and guidance in an affair of so much importance to the father as the happiness and well-being of his son. At the portion of the service when he bows down his head to God, he beseeches with much humility, calling on the great power and goodness of God to instruct and guide him for the best interest of his child; and then he repeats a short prayer expressive of his reliance on the wisdom of God, and his perfect submission to whatever may be

His wise decree in this important business. The prayer concluded, he seats himself with solemn gravity on the prayer-carpet, again and again imploring Divine guidance, without which he is sure nothing good can accrue: he then draws one slip from under his carpet; if "to be" is produced, he places it by his left side;—a second slip is drawn out, should that also bear the words "to be," the business is so far decided. He then offers thanks and praises to God, congratulates his wife on the successful issue of the omen, and discusses those plans which appear most likely to further the prospects of their dearly-loved son. But should the second and third papers say "not to be," he is assured in his heart it was so decided by "that Wisdom which cannot err;" to whom he gives praise and glory for all mercies received at His hand: after this no overture or negotiation would be listened to by the pious father from the same quarter.

The omen, however, proving favourable, the affair is decided; and in order to gain the best possible information of the real disposition of all

parties concerned, a confidential friend is sent to the zeenahnah of the young lady's mother to make her own observations on what passes within; and to ascertain, if possible, whether the report brought by the female agent was true or exaggerated; and finally, to learn if their son would be received or rejected as a suitor, provided advances were made.

The female friend returns, after a day or two's absence, to the anxious parents of the youth, and details all she has seen or heard during her visit. The young lady may, perhaps, have been seen (this is not always conceded to such visitors), in which case her person, her manners, her apparent disposition, the hospitality and good breeding of the mother and other members of the zeenahnah, are described; and lastly, it is hinted that, all other things suiting, the young lady being yet disengaged, the projected offer would not be disagreeable to her parents.

The father of the youth then resolves on sending a male agent in due form to negotiate a marriage, unless he happens to be personally acquainted with the girl's father; in

which case, the lady is desired to send her female agent on the embassy, and the father of the youth speaks on the subject in the mean time to the girl's father.

A very intimate friend of mine was seeking for a suitable match for her son, and being much in her confidence, I was initiated in all the mysteries and arrangements (according to Mussulmaun rule) of the affair pending the marriage of her son.

The young lady to be sought (wooed we should have it), had been described as amiable and pretty—advantages as much esteemed as her rank;—fortune she had none worth mentioning, but it was what is termed in Indian society a good and equal match. The overture was, therefore, to be made from the youth's family in the following manner:

On a silver tray covered with gold brocade and fringed with silver, was laid the youth's pedigree, traced by a neat writer in the Persian character, on richly embossed paper ornamented and emblazoned with gold figures. The youth being a Syaad, his pedigree was

traced up to Mahumud, in both paternal and maternal lines, and many a hero and begum of their noble blood filled up the space from the Prophet down to the youthful Meer Mahumud, my friend's son.

On the tray, with the pedigree, was laid a nuzza, or offering of five gold mohurs, and twenty-one (the lucky number) rupees; a brocaded cover, fringed with silver, was spread over the whole, and this was conveyed by the male agent to the young begum's father. The tray and its contents are retained for ever, if the proposal is accepted; if rejected, the parties return the whole without delay, which is received as a tacit proof that the suitor is rejected: no further explanation is ever given or required.

In the present instance the tray was detained, and in a few days after a female from their family was sent to my friend's house to make a general scrutiny of the zeenahnah and its inmates. This female was pressed to stay a day or two, and in that time many important subjects underwent discussion. The youth was introduced, and every thing according with the

views entertained by both parties, the fathers met, and the marriage, it was decided, should take place within a twelvemonth, when the young lady would have accomplished her thirteenth year.

"Do you decide on having Mugganee performed?" is the question proposed by the father of the youth to the father of the young maiden. In the present case it was chosen, and great were the preparations of my friend to do all possible honour to the future bride of her son.

Mugganee is the first contract, by which the parties are bound to fulfil their engagement at an appointed time.

The dress for a bride differs in one material point from the general style of Hindoostaunie costume: a sort of gown is worn, made of silver tissue, or some equally expensive article, about the walking length of an English dress; the skirt is open in front, and contains about twenty breadths of the material, a tight body and long sleeves. The whole dress is trimmed very richly with embroidered trimming and silver riband;

the deputtah (drapery) is made to correspond. This style of dress is the original Hindoo fashion, and was worn at the Court of Delhi for many centuries; but of late years it has been used only on marriage festivals amongst the better sort of people in Hindoostaun, except Kings or Nuwaubs sending khillauts to females, when this dress, called a jhammah, is invariably one of the articles.

The costly dresses for the present Mugganee, my friend prepared at a great expense, and with much good taste; to which were added a ruby ring of great value, large gold ear-rings, offerings of money, the flower-garlands for the head, neck, wrists, and ancles, formed of the sweet-scented jessamine; choice confectionary set out in trays with the pawns and fruits; the whole conveyed under an escort of soldiers and servants with a band of music, from the residence of Meer Mahumud to that of his bride elect, accompanied by many friends of the family. These offerings from the youth bind the contract with the young lady, who wears his ring from that day to the end of her life.

The poorer sort of people perform Mugganee by the youth simply sending a rupee in a silk band, to be tied on the girl's arm.

Being curious to know the whole business of a wedding ceremony amongst the Mussulmaun people, I was allowed to perform the part of "officiating friend" on this occasion of celebrating the Mugganee. The parents of the young lady having been consulted my visit was a source of solicitude to the whole family, who made every possible preparation to receive me with becoming respect; I went just in time to reach the gate at the moment the parade arrived. I was handed to the door of the zeenahnah by the girl's father, and was soon surrounded by the young members of the family, together with many lady-visitors, slaves, and women-servants of the establishment. They had never before seen an Englishwoman, and the novelty, I fancy, surprised the whole group; they examined my dress, my complexion, hair, hands, &c., and looked the wonder they could not express in words. The young Begum was not amongst the gazing throng; some preliminary

customs detained her behind the purdah, where it may be supposed she endured all the agony of suspense and curiosity by her compliance with the prescribed forms.

The lady of the mansion waited my approach to the dulhaun (great hall) with all due etiquette, standing to receive and embrace me on my advancing towards her. This ceremony performed, I was invited to take a seat on the musnud-carpet with her on the ground; a chair had been provided for me, but I chose to respect the lady's preference, and the seat on the floor suited me for the time without much inconvenience.

After some time had been passed in conversation on such subjects as suited the taste of the lady of the house, I was surprised at the servants entering with trays, which they placed immediately before me, containing a full-dress suit in the costume of Hindoostaun. The hostess told me she had prepared this dress for me, and I must condescend to wear it. I would have declined the gaudy array, but one

of her friends whispered me, "The custom is of long standing; when the face of a stranger is first seen a dress is always presented; I should displease Sumdun Begum by my refusal;—besides, it would be deemed an ill omen at the Mugganee of the ẏóung Bohue Begum if I did not put on the Native dress before I saw the face of the bride elect." These I found to be weighty arguments, and felt constrained to quiet their apprehensions of ill-luck by compliance; I therefore forced the gold dress and the glittering drapery over my other clothes, at the expense of some suffering from the heat, for it was at the very hottest season of the year, and the dulhaun was crowded with visitors.

This important point conceded to them, I was led to a side hall, where the little girl was seated on her carpet of rich embroidery, her face resting on her knees in apparent bashfulness. I could not directly ascertain whether she was plain, or pretty as the female agent had represented. I was allowed the privilege of decorating the young lady with the sweet jessa-

mine guinahs, and placing the ring on the fore-finger of the right hand; after which, the ear-rings, the gold-tissue dress, the deputtah were all in their turn put on, the offering of money presented, and then I had the first embrace before her mother. She looked very pretty, just turned twelve. If I could have prevailed on her to be cheerful, I should have been much gratified to have extended my visit in her apartment, but the poor child seemed ready to sink with timidity; and out of compassion to the dear girl, I hurried away from the hall, to relieve her from the burden my presence seemed to inflict, the moment I had accomplished my last duty, which was to feed her with my own hand, giving her seven pieces of sugarcandy; seven, on this occasion, is the lucky number, I presume, as I was particulary cautioned to feed her with exactly that number of pieces.

Returning to the assembly in the dulhaun, I would have gladly taken leave; but there was yet one other custom to be observed to secure a happy omen to the young people's union. Once again seated on the musnud with Sumdun

Begum,* the female slaves entered with sherbet in silver basins. Each person taking sherbet is expected to deposit gold or silver coins in the tray; the sherbet-money at this house is collected for the bride; and when during the three days' performance of the marriage ceremony at the bridegroom's house sherbet is presented to the guests, the money collected there is reserved for him. The produce of the two houses is afterwards compared, and conclusions drawn as to the greatest portion of respect paid by the friends on either side. The poor people find the sherbet-money a useful fund to help them to keep house; but with the rich it is a mere matter to boast of, that so much money was collected in consequence of the number of visitors who attended the nuptials.

After the Mugganee ceremony had been performed, and before the marriage was solemnized, the festival of Buckrah Eade occurred;—in the eleventh Letter you will find it remarked,

* Sumdum, is always the title of the bride's mamma; Bohue, that of the young wife, and, therefore, my thus designating her here is premature.

the bride and bridegroom elect then exchange presents;—my friend was resolved her son's presents should do honour to both houses, and the following may give you an idea of an Eade-gift.

Thirty-five goats and sheep of the finest breed procurable, which I succeeded in having sent in their natural dress, instead of being adorned with gold-cloth and painted horns: it was, however, with some persuasion the folly of this general practice was omitted in this instance.

The guinah or garlands of flowers on a tray covered with brocade. The guinah are sweet-scented flowers without stalks, threaded into garlands in many pretty ways, with great taste and ingenuity, intermixed with silver ribands; they are formed into bracelets, necklaces, armlets, chaplets for the head, and bangles for the legs. There are people in Lucknow who make the preparing of guinahs a profitable business, as the population is so extensive as to render these flower-ornaments articles of great request.

A tray filled with pawns, prepared with the usual ingredients, as lime cuttie (a bitter

gum), betel-nut, tobacco, spices, &c.; these pawns are tied up in packets of a triangular form and covered with enamelled foil of many bright colours. Several trays of ripe fruits of the season, viz., kurbootahs (shaddock), kabooza (melons), ununas (pine apple), guavers, sheerreefha (custard-apple), kummeruck, jarmun (purple olives), orme (mango), falsah, kirhnee, baer, leechie, ormpeach, carounder, and many other kinds of less repute.

Confectionary and sweetmeats, on trays, in all the varieties of Indian invention; a full-dress suit for the young lady; and on a silver tray the youth's nuzza of five gold mohurs, and twenty-one rupees

The Eade offering of Meer Mahumud was escorted by servants, soldiers, and a band of music; and the young lady returned a present to the bridegroom elect of thirty-five goats and sheep, and a variety of undress skull-caps, supposed to be her own work, in spangles and embroidery. I may state here, that the Natives of India never go bare-headed in the house. The turban is always worn in company, whatever

may be the inconvenience from heat; and in private life, a small skull-cap, often of plain white muslin, just covers the head. It is considered disgraceful in men to expose the head bare; removing the turban from the head of an individual would be deemed as insulting as pulling a nose in Europe.

Whatever Eade or festival may occur between the Mugganee and the final celebration of nuptials, presents are always interchanged by the young bride and bridegroom; and with all such observances there is one prevailing custom, which is, that though there should be nothing at hand but part of their own gifts, the trays are not allowed to go back without some trifling things to keep the custom in full force.

LETTER XIV.

Wedding ceremonies of the Mussulmauns.—The new or full moon propitious to the rites being concluded.—Marriage settlements unknown.—Control of the wife over her own property.—Three days and nights occupied in celebrating the wedding.—Preparations previously made by both families.—Ostentatious display on these occasions.—Day of Sarchuck.—Customs on the day of Mayndhie.—Sending Presents.—Day of Baarraat.—Procession of the bridegroom to fetch the bride.—The bride's departure to her new home.—Attendant ceremonies explained.—Similarity of the Mussulmaun and Hindoo ceremonies.—Anecdote of a Moollah.—Tying the Narrah to the Moosul.

When the young lady's family have made all the necessary arrangements for that important event (their daughter's nuptials), notice is sent to the friends of the intended bridegroom, and the gentlemen of both families meet to settle on what day the celebration is to take place. They are guided in the final arrange-

ment by the state of the moon—the new or full moon has the preference; she must, however, be clear of Scorpio, which, as I have before stated, they consider the unfortunate sign. There are some moons in the year considered very unpropitious to marry in. At Mahurrum, for instance, no emergency as to time or circumstance would induce the female party to consent to the marriage solemnities taking place. In Rumzaun they have scruples, though not equal to those which they entertain against fulfilling the contract in Mahurrum, the month of mourning.

Marriage settlements are not known in Mussulmaun society. All is contracts are made by word of mouth; and to their credit, honourable reliance is usually followed by honourable fulfilment of agreements. The husband is expected to be satisfied with whatever portion of his wife's fortune the friends may deem consistent or prudent to grant with their daughter. The wife is at liberty to keep under her own control any separate sum or allowance her parents may be pleased to give her, over and

above the marriage portion granted to the husband with his wife.

The husband rarely knows the value of his wife's private property unless, as sometimes happens, the couple in after years have perfect confidence in each other, and make no separate interests in worldly matters. Occasionally, where the married couple have not lived happily together, the wife has been known to bury her cash secretly; and perhaps she may die without disclosing the secret of her treasure to any one.

In India the practice of burying treasure is very common with females, particularly in villages, or where there are fears entertained of robbers. There is no difficulty in burying cash or other treasure, where the ground floors of the houses are merely beaten earth—boarded floors, indeed, are never seen in Hindoostaun—in the houses of the first classes of Natives they sometimes have them bricked and plastered, or paved with marble. During the rainy season I have sometimes observed the wooden tuckht (a portable platform) in use with aged or delicate

females, on which they make their seats from fear of the damp from the mud floor; but they complain that these accommodations are not half so comfortable as their ordinary seat.

The division of personal property between married people has the effect of rendering the wife much more independent than the married lady of other countries. The plan is a judicious one in the existing state of Mussulmaun society, for since the husband could at his pleasure add other wives, the whole property of the first wife might be squandered on these additions. In the middling classes of society, and where the husband is a religious person, this division of property is not so strictly maintained; yet every wife has the privilege, if she choose to exercise it, of keeping a private purse, which the good wife will produce unasked to meet her husband's emergencies; and which the good husband is never known to demand, however great may be his necessities. There are many traits of character in the Mussulmaun world that render them both amiable and happy, wherever politeness of behaviour is

brought to bear. I have seen some bright examples of forbearance and affectionate solicitude in both sexes, which would do honour to the most refined societies of the civilized world.

The marriage ceremony occupies three days and nights:—The first is called, Sarchuck; the second, Mayndhie; and the third, Baarraat, (fate or destiny is the meaning of this word).

I am not aware that three days are required to accomplish the nuptials of the young couple in any other society of Mussulmauns distinct from those of Hindoostaun. Judging by similar usages among the Hindoo population, I am rather disposed to conjecture that this is one of the customs of the aborigines, imitated by the invaders, as the outward parade and publicity given to the event by the Mussulmauns, greatly resemble those of the surrounding Hindoos.

There are no licences granted, nor any form of registry kept of marriages. Any person who is acquainted with the Khoraun may read the marriage ceremony, in the presence of witnesses if it be possible; but they usually

employ a professed Moollah or Maulvee, in consideration of such persons being the most righteous in their lives; for they make this engagement a religious, as well as a civil contract.

The day being fixed, the elders, male and female, of the two families, invite their several relatives, friends, and acquaintance to assemble, according to their means and convenience for entertaining visitors. The invitations are written in the Persian character on red paper, describing the particular event they are expected to honour. During the week previous to Sarchuck, both families are busily engaged in sending round to their several friends trays of ready-cooked dinners. Rich and poor share equally on these occasions; the reason assigned for which is, that the persons' nuptials may be registered in the minds of those who partake of the food, who in the course of time, might otherwise forget that they had ever heard of the young couple's nuptials.

The mother of Bohue Begum actively employed the intervening time, in finishing her

preparations for the young lady's departure from the parental roof with suitable articles, which might prove the bride was not sent forth to her new family without a proper provision. There is certainly too much ostentation evinced on these occasions; but custom, prided custom, bids defiance to every better argument; and thus the mother, full of solicitude that her daughter should carry with her evident marks of parental affection, and be able to sustain her rank in life, loads her child with a profusion of worldly goods. The poorest people, in this instance, imitate their superiors with a blameable disregard to consequences. Many parents among the lower orders, incur heavy debts to enable them to make a parade at their children's wedding, which proves a source of misery to themselves as long as they live.

It may be presumed the Sumdun Begum prepared more suits of finery than her daughter could wear out for years. A silver bedstead with the necessary furniture, as before described; a silver pawn-dawn, round, and shaped very like a modern spice-box in England; a

silver chillumchee (wash-hand basin), and lota (water-jug with a spout, nearly resembling an old-fashioned coffee-pot); a silver luggun (spittoon); silver surraie (water-bottle); silver basins for water; several dozens of copper sauce-pans, plates and spoons for cooking; dishes, plates, and platters in all variety needful for the house, of metal or of stone. China or glass is rarely amongst the bride's portion, the only articles of glass I remember to have seen was the looking-glass for the bride's toilette, and that was framed and cased in pure silver. Stone dishes are a curious and expensive article, brought from Persia and Arabia, of a greenish colour, highly polished; the Natives call them racaab-puttie, and prefer them to silver at their meals, having an idea that poisoned food would break them; and he who should live in fear of such a calamity, feels secure that the food is pure when the dish of this rare stone is placed before him perfect.

Amongst the various articles sent with the bride to her new home is the much prized musnud, cushions and carpet to correspond; shut-

teringhiés, and calico carpets, together with the most minute article used in Native houses, whether for the kitchen, or for the accommodation of the young lady in her apartments; all these are conveyed in the lady's train when she leaves her father's house to enter that of her husband. I am afraid my descriptions will be deemed tediously particular, so apt are we to take the contagion of example from those we associate with; and as things unimportant in other societies are made of so much consequence to these people, I am in danger of giving to trifles more importance than may be agreeable to my readers.

On the day of Sarchuck the zeenahnahs of both houses are completely filled with visitors of all grades, from the wives and mothers of noblemen, down to the humblest acquaintance of the family. To do honour to the hostess, the guests appear in their best attire and most valuable ornaments.

A wedding in the family of a respectable Mussulmaun is very often the medium of reconciling long standing estrangements between friends.

Human nature has the same failings in every climate; there will be some who entertain jealousies and envyings in all societies, but a wedding with these people is a perfect peace-maker, since none of the invited can consistently stay away; and in such an assembly, where is the evil mind to disturb harmony, or recur to past grievances?

The day of Sarchuck is the first time the young lady receives the appellation of Dullun, at which time also the bridegroom is designated Dullha. Dullun is kept in strict confinement, in a dark room or closet, during the whole three days' merriment going forward under the parental roof; whilst the bridegroom is the most prominent person in the assembly of the males, where amusements are contrived to please and divert him, the whole party vieing in personal attentions to him. The ladies are occupied in conversation and merriment, and amused with the native songs and music of the dominie, smoking the hookha, eating pawn, dinner, &c. Company is their delight, and

time passes pleasantly with them in such an assembly.

The second day, Mayndhie, is one of bustle and preparation in the Sumdun Begum's department; it is spent in arranging the various articles that are to accompany the bride's Mayndhie, which is forwarded in the evening to the bridegroom with great parade.

It is so well known that I need hardly mention the fact, that the herb mayndhie is in general request amongst the natives of India, for the purpose of dyeing the hands and feet; it is considered by them an indispensable article to their comfort, keeping those members cool and a great ornament to the person.

Long established custom obliges the bride to send mayndhie on the second night of the nuptials to the bridegroom; and, to make the event more conspicuous, presents proportioned to the means of the party accompany the trays of prepared mayndhie.

The female friends of the bride's family attend the Mayndhie procession in covered con-

veyances, and the male guests on horses, elephants, and in palkies; trains of soldiers, servants, and bands of music swell the procession (among people of distinction) to a magnitude inconceivable to those who have not visited the Native cities of Hindoostaun, or witnessed the parade of a marriage ceremony.

Amongst the bride's presents with mayndhie, may be noticed every thing requisite for a full-dress suit for the bridegroom, and the etceteras of his toilette; confectionary, dried fruits, preserves, the prepared pawns, and a multitude of trifles too tedious to enumerate, but which are nevertheless esteemed luxuries with the Native young people, and are considered essential to the occasion. One thing I must not omit, the sugar-candy, which forms the source of amusement when the bridegroom is under the dominion of the females in his mother's zeenahnah. The artush bajie, (fireworks) sent with the presents, are concealed in flowers formed of the transparent uberuck: these flowers are set out in frames, called chumund, and represent beds of flowers in their varied forms and

colours; these in their number and gay appearance have a pretty effect in the procession, interspersed with the trays containing the dresses, &c. All the trays are first covered with basket-work raised in domes, and over these are thrown draperies of broad-cloth, gold-cloth, and brocade, neatly fringed in bright colours.

The Mayndhie procession having reached the bridegroom's house, bustle and excitement pervade through every department of the mansion. The gentlemen are introduced to the father's hall; the ladies to the youth's mother, who in all possible state is prepared to receive the bride's friends.

The interior of a zeenahnah has been already described; the ladies crowd into the centre hall to witness, through the blinds of bamboo, the important process of dressing the young bridegroom in his bride's presents. The centre purdah is let down, in which are openings to admit the hands and feet; and close to this purdah a low stool is placed. When all these preliminary preparations are made, and the ladies securely under cover, notice is sent to

the male assembly that, "Dullha is wanted;" and he then enters the zeenahnah court-yard, amidst the deafening sounds of trumpets and drums from without, and a serenade from the female singers within. He seats himself on the stool placed for him close to the purdah, and obeys the several commands he receives from the hidden females, with childlike docility. The moist mayndhie is then tied on with bandages by hands he cannot see, and, if time admits, one hour is requisite to fix the dye bright and permanent on the hands and feet. During this delay, the hour is passed in lively dialogues with the several purdahed dames, who have all the advantage of seeing though themselves unseen; the singers occasionally lauding his praise in extempore strains, after describing the loveliness of his bride, (whom they know nothing about), and foretelling the happiness which awaits him in his marriage, but which, in the lottery, may perhaps prove a blank. The sugar-candy, broken into small lumps, is presented by the ladies whilst his hands and feet are fast bound in the bandages of mayndhie; but as

he cannot help himself, and it is an omen of good to eat the bride's sweets at this ceremony, they are sure he will try to catch the morsels which they present to his mouth and then draw back, teasing the youth with their banterings, until at last he may successfully snap at the candy, and seize the fingers also with the dainty, to the general amusement of the whole party and the youth's entire satisfaction.

The mayndhie supposed to have done its duty, the bandages are removed; his old unnah, the nurse of his infancy (always retained for life), assists him with water to wash off the leaves, dries his feet and hands, rubs him with otta, robes him in his bride's presents, and ornaments him with the guinah. Thus attired he takes leave of his tormentors, sends respectful messages to his bride's family, and bows his way from their guardianship to the male apartment, where he is greeted by a flourish of trumpets and the congratulations of the guests, many of whom present nuzzas and embrace him cordially.

The dinner is introduced at twelve, amongst

the bridegroom's guests, and the night passed in good-humoured conviviality, although the strongest beverage at the feast consists of sugar and water sherbet. The dancing-women's performances, the display of fireworks, the dinner, pawn, and hookha, form the chief amusements of the night, and they break up only when the dawn of morning approaches.

The bride's female friends take sherbet and pawn after the bridegroom's departure from the zeenahnah, after which they hasten away to the bride's assembly, to detail the whole business of their mission.

I have often heard the ladies complain, that the time hangs very heavy on their hands whilst the party are gone to perform Mayndhie, until the good ladies return with their budget of particulars. Hundreds of questions are then put to them by the inquisitive dames, how the procession passed off?—whether accident or adventure befel them on the march?—what remarks were made on the bride's gifts?—but most of all they want to know, how the bridegroom looked, and how he behaved under their hands?

The events of the evening take up the night in detailing, with the occasional interruptions of dinner, pawn, and sherbet; and so well are they amused, that they seldom feel disposed to sleep until the crowing of the cock warns them that the night has escaped with their diversified amusements.

The eventful Baarraat arrives to awaken in the heart of a tender mother all the good feelings of fond affection; she is, perhaps, about to part with the great solace of her life under many domestic trials; at any rate, she transfers her beloved child to another protection. All marriages are not equally happy in their termination; it is a lottery, a fate, in the good mother's calculation. Her darling child may be the favoured of Heaven for which she prays; she may be, however, the miserable first wife of a licentious pluralist; nothing is certain, but she will strive to trust in God's mercy, that the event prove a happy one to her dearly-loved girl.

I have said the young bride is in close confinement during the days of celebrating her

nuptials; on the third she is tormented with the preparations for her departure. The mayndhie must be applied to her hands and feet, the formidable operations of bathing, drying her hair, oiling and dressing her head, dyeing her lips, gums, and teeth with antimony, fixing on her the wedding ornaments, the nut (nose-ring) presented by her husband's family: the many rings to be placed on her fingers and toes, the rings fixed in her ears, are all so many new trials to her, which though a complication of inconveniences, she cannot venture to murmur at, and therefore submits to with the passive meekness of a lamb.

Towards the close of the evening, all this preparation being fulfilled, the marriage portion is set in order to accompany the bride. The guests make their own amusements for the day; the mother is too much occupied with her daughter's affairs to give much of her time or attention to them; nor do they expect it, for they all know by experience the nature of a mother's duties at such an interesting period.

The bridegroom's house is nearly in the same

state of bustle as the bride's, though of a very different description, as the preparing for the reception of a bride is an event of vast importance in the opinion of a Mussulmaun. The gentlemen assemble in the evening, and are regaled with sherbet and the hookha, and entertained with the nautch-singing and fireworks until the appointed hour for setting out in the procession to fetch the bride to her new home.

The procession is on a grand scale; every friend or acquaintance, together with their elephants, are pressed into the service of the bridegroom on this night of Baarraat. The young man himself is mounted on a handsome charger, the legs, tail, and mane of which are dyed with mayndhie, whilst the ornamental furniture of the horse is splendid with spangles and embroidery. The dress of the bridegroom is of gold-cloth, richly trimmed, with a turban to correspond, to the top of which is fastened an immense bunch of silver trimming, that falls over his face to his waist, and answers the purpose of a veil, (this is in strict keeping with the Hindoo custom at their marriage proces-

sions). A select few of the females from the bridegroom's house attend in his train to bring home the bride, accompanied by innumerable torches, with bands of music, soldiers, and servants, to give effect to the procession. On their arrival at the gate of the bride's residence, the gentlemen are introduced to the father's apartments, where fireworks, music, and singing, occupy their time and attention until the hour for departure arrives.

The marriage ceremony is performed in the presence of witnesses, although the bride is not seen by any of the males at the time, not even by her husband, until they have been lawfully united according to the common form.

In the centre of the hall, in the zeenahnah, a tuckht (platform) six feet square is placed, on which the musnud of gold brocade is set. This is the bride's seat when dressed for her nuptials; she is surrounded by ladies who bear witness to the marriage ceremony. The purdahs are let down, and the Maulvee, the bridegroom, the two fathers, and a few male friends are introduced to the zeenahnah court-yard,

with a flourish of trumpets and deafening sounds of drums. They advance with much gravity towards the purdahs, and arrange themselves close to this slender partition between the two sexes.

The Maulvee commences by calling on the young maiden by name, to answer to his demand, "Is it by your own consent this marriage takes place with ——— ?" naming the person who is the bridegroom; the bride answers, "It is by my consent." The Maulvee then explains the law of Mahumud, and reads a certain chapter from that portion of the Khoraun which binds the parties in holy wedlock. He then turns to the young man, and asks him to name the sum he proposes as his wife's dowry. The bridegroom thus called upon, names ten, twenty, or perhaps a hundred lacs of rupees; the Maulvee repeats to all present the amount proposed, and then prays that the young couple thus united may be blessed in this world and in eternity. All the gentlemen then retire, except the bridegroom, who is delayed as soon as this is accomplished entering

the hall until the bride's guests have retreated into the side rooms: as soon as this is accomplished he is introduced into the presence of his mother-in-law and her daughter by the women servants. He studiously avoids looking up as he enters the hall, because, according to the custom of this people, he must first see his wife's face in a looking-glass, which is placed before the young couple, when he is seated on the musnud by his bride. Happy for him if he then beholds a face that bespeaks the gentle being he hopes Fate has destined to make him happy; if otherwise he must submit; there is no untying the sacred contract.

Many absurd customs follow this first introduction of the bride and bridegroom. When the procession is all formed, the goods and chattels of the bride are loaded on the heads of the carriers; the bridegroom conveys his young wife in his arms to the chundole (covered palankeen), which is in readiness within the court, and the procession moves off in grand style, with a perpetual din of noisy music until they arrive at the bridegroom's mansion.

The poor mother has perhaps had many

struggles with her own heart to save her daughter's feelings during the preparation for departure; but when the separation takes place the scene is affecting beyond description. I never witnessed any thing to equal it in other societies: indeed, so powerfully are the feelings of the mother excited, that she rarely acquires her usual composure until her daughter is allowed to revisit her, which is generally within a week after her marriage.

P.S.—I have remarked that, in important things which have nothing to do with the religion of the Mussulmauns, they are disposed to imitate the habits of the Hindoos; this is more particularly to be traced in many of their wedding customs.

In villages where there are a greater proportion of Hindoos than Mussulmauns the females of the two people mix more generally than is usually allowed in cities or large towns; and it is amongst this mingled population that we find the spirit of superstition influencing the female character in a more marked manner

than it does in more populous places, which the following anecdote will illustrate. The parties were known to the person who related the circumstance to me.

"A learned man, a moollah or head-teacher and expounder of the Mahumudan law, resided in a village six koss (twelve miles English) distant from Lucknow, the capital of Oude. This moollah was married to a woman of good family, by whom he had a large progeny of daughters. He lived in great respect, and cultivated his land with success, the produce of his farm not only supporting his own family, but enabling the good moollah to distribute largely amongst the poor, his neighbours, and the passing traveller. A hungry applicant never left his door without a meal of the same wholesome, yet humble fare, which formed his own daily sustenance. Bread and dhall he preferred to the most choice delicacies, as by this abstemious mode of living, he was enabled to feed and comfort the afflicted with the residue of his income.

"This moollah was one of the most pious men of the age, and alive to the interests of his

fellow-mortals, both temporal and eternal. He gave instruction gratis to as many pupils as chose to attend his lectures, and desired to acquire from his matured knowledge an introduction to the points of faith, and instruction in the Mussulmaun laws. Numbers of young students attended his hall daily, to listen to the expounding of the rules and maxims he had acquired by a long life devoted to the service of God, and his duty to mankind. In him, many young men found a benefactor who blended instruction with temporal benefits; so mild and persuasive were this good moollah's monitions, that he lived in the affection, veneration, and respect of his pupils, as a fond father in the love of his children.

"The wife of this good man managed the domestic affairs of the family, which were very little controlled by her husband's interference. On an occasion of solemnizing the nuptials of one of their daughters, the wife sent a message to the moollah, by a female slave, requiring his immediate presence in the zeenahnah, that he might perform his allotted part in the ceremony, which, as elder of the house, could not be con-

fided to any other hands but his. This was to 'tie the naarah to the moosul.'*

"The moollah was deeply engaged in expounding to his pupils a difficult passage of the Khoraun when the slave entered and delivered her message. 'Coming,' he answered, without looking at the messenger, and continued his exposition.

"The good woman of the house was in momentary expectation of her husband's arrival, but when one hour had elapsed, her impatience overcame her discretion, and she dispatched the slave a second time to summon the moollah, who, in his anxiety to promote a better work, had forgotten the subject of tying the naarah to the moosul. The slave again entered the hall, and delivered her lady's message; he was then engaged in a fresh exposition, and, as before, replied 'coming,' but still proceeding with his subject as if he heard not the summons.

* The naarah is a cord of many threads dyed red and yellow; the moosul the heavy beam in use where rice is to be cleansed from the husks. The custom is altogether of Hindoo origin.

"Another hour elapsed, and the wife's ordinary patience was exhausted; 'Go to your master, slave!' she said with authority in her voice and manner; 'go ask your master from me, whether it is his intention to destroy the peace of his house, and the happiness of his family. Ask him, why he should delay performing so important a duty at this ceremony, when his own daughter's interest and welfare are at stake?'

"The slave faithfully conveyed the message, and the moollah, finding that his domestic peace depended on submitting to the superstitious notions of his wife, accompanied the slave to the zeenahnah without farther delay.

"The moollah's compliance with the absurd desires of his wife surprised the students, who discussed the subject freely in his absence. He having always taught them the folly of prejudice and the absurdity of superstition, they could not comprehend how it was the moollah had been led to comply with a request so much at variance with the principles he endeavoured to impress upon them.

"On his return, after a short absence, to his pupils, he was about to re-commence the passage at which he had left off to attend his wife's summons; one of the young men, however, interrupted him by the inquiry, 'Whether he had performed the important business of tying the naarah to the moosul?'—'Yes,' answered the moollah, very mildly, 'and by so doing I have secured peace to my wife's disturbed mind.'—'But how is it, reverend Sir,' rejoined the student, 'that your actions and your precepts are at variance? You caution us against every species of superstition, and yet that you have in this instance complied with one, is very evident.'—'I grant you, my young friend,' said the moollah, 'that I have indeed done so, but my motive for this deviation is, I trust, correct. I could have argued with you on the folly of tying the naarah to the moosul, and you would have been convinced by my arguments; but my wife, alas! would not listen to any thing but —the custom—the custom of the whole village. I went with reluctance, I performed the ceremony with still greater; yet I had no alternative

if I valued harmony in my household: this I have now secured by my acquiescence in the simple desire of my wife. Should any evil accident befall my daughter or her husband, I am spared the reproaches that would have been heaped upon me, as being the cause of the evil, from my refusal to tie the naarah to the moosul. The mere compliance with this absurd custom, to secure peace and harmony, does not alter my faith; I have saved others from greater offences, by my passive obedience to the wishes of my wife, who ignorantly places dependance on the act, as necessary to her daughter's welfare.'

"The students were satisfied with his explanation, and their respect was increased for the good man who had thus taught them to see and to cherish the means of living peaceably with all mankind, whenever their actions do not tend to injure their religious faith, or infringe on the principles of morality and virtue."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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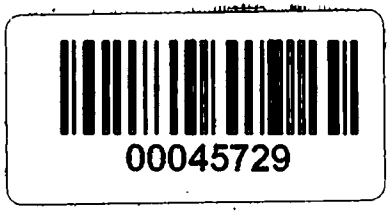
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